## DOCUMENT RESUME

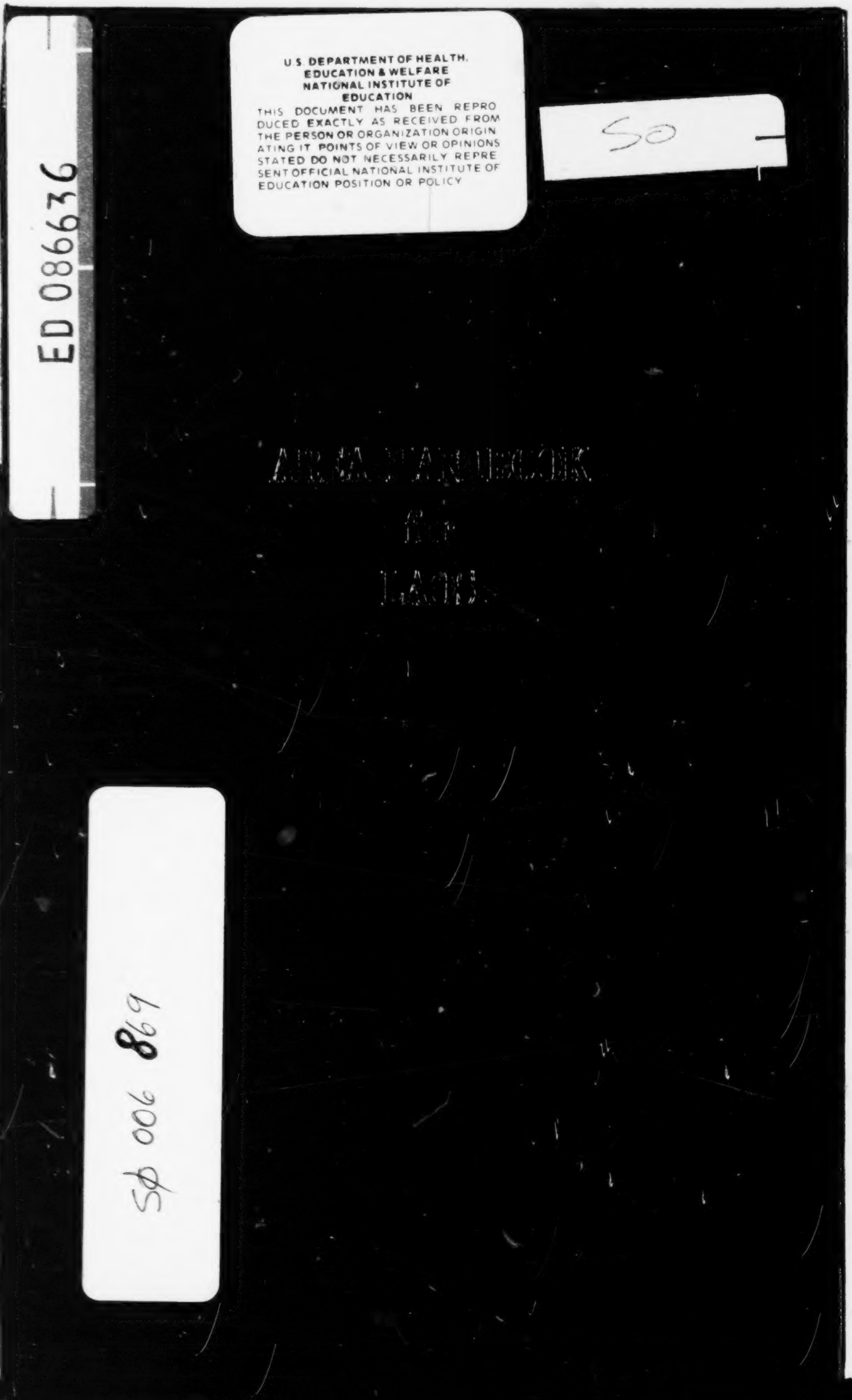
ED 086 636 SO 006 869

| | |
|---|---|
| AUTHOR | Whitaker, Donald P.; And Others |
| TITLE | Area Handbook for Laos. |
| INSTITUTION | American Univ., Washington, D.C. Foreign Area Studies. |
| REPORT NO | DA-Pam-550-58 |
| PUB DATE | 72 |
| NOTE | 346p. |
| AVAILABLE FROM | Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 20402 ($4.50) |
| EDRS PRICE | MF-$0.65 HC-$13.16 |
| DESCRIPTORS | *Area Studies; Cultural Background; Demography; *Developing Nations; Economic Change; Economics; *Foreign Culture; Foreign Relations; Geography; Governmental Structure; Guides; History; Military Organizations; National Defense; Religion; Social Attitudes; Social Structure; Social Systems; Sociocultural Patterns; Values |
| IDENTIFIERS | *Laos |

ABSTRACT

The volume on Laos is one of a series of handbooks prepared by the Foreign Area Studies (FAS) of the American University. It is designed to be useful to military and other personnel who need a convenient compilation of basic facts about the social, economic, political, military institutions and practices of Laos. An objective description of the nation's present society and the kinds of possible or probable changes that might be expected in the future are emphasized. An extensive bibliography, a glossary, and an index are provided. Related documents are ED 080 414 and SO 006 670. (Author)

FILMED FROM BEST AVAILABLE COPY



ED 086636

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

SO

# AREA HANDBOOK
for
LAOS

SO 006 869

ED 086635

# AREA HANDBOOK
# FOR
# LAOS

*Co-Authors*

**Donald P. Whitaker**

**Helen A. Barth**
**Sylvan M. Berman**
**Judith M. Heimann**
**John E. MacDonald**
**Kenneth W. Martindale**
**Rinn-Sup Shinn**

SO 006 869

**Research and writing were completed June 1971**

**Published 1972**

**(This handbook supersedes DA Pam 550-58, June 1967, including all changes.**

**DA PAM 550-58**

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 72-600173

---

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office
Washington, D. C. 20402–Price $4.50

# FOREWORD

This volume is one of a series of handbooks prepared by Foreign Area Studies (FAS) of The American University, designed to be useful to military and other personnel who need a convenient compilation of basic facts about the social, economic, political, and military institutions and practices of various countries. The emphasis is on objective description of the nation's present society and the kinds of possible or probable changes that might be expected in the future. The handbook seeks to present as full and as balanced an integrated exposition as limitations on space and research time permit. It was compiled from information available in openly published material. An extensive bibliography is provided to permit recourse to other published sources for more detailed information. There has been no attempt to express any specific point of view or to make policy recommendations. The contents of the handbook represent the work of the authors and FAS and do not represent the official view of the United States government.

An effort has been made to make the handbook as comprehensive as possible. It can be expected, however, that the material, interpretations, and conclusions are subject to modification in the light of new information and developments. Such corrections, additions, and suggestions for factual, interpretive, or other change as readers may have will be welcomed for use in future revisions. Comments may be addressed to:

The Director
Foreign Area Studies
The American University
5010 Wisconsin Avenue, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20016

# PREFACE

Since the writing of the 1967 edition of the *Area Handbook for Laos* new information and source materials have become available on the area of Laos controlled by the Lao Patriotic Front (Neo Lao Hak Sat—NLHS). This new information makes it clear that at the time of preparation of this revised handbook the country was in fact a divided one, with divergent ideologies, different economic systems, and two de facto administrations.

The current volume is largely a new presentation based upon the realities of the situation in Laos. Some materials, however, have been used from the 1967 edition, which was written by a team headed by T. D. Roberts and which included Mary Elizabeth Carroll, Irving Kaplan, Jan M. Matthews, David S. McMorris, and Charles Townsend.

A major political development not covered in this edition is the general elections for a new National Assembly held by the Royal Lao Government on January 2, 1972. The NLHS again refused to participate, as it had refused to take part in the general elections of 1965 and 1967, on the same grounds—that the elections were "illegal." Voting, therefore, was confined to Royal Lao Government-controlled areas.

Military operations of the Lao People's Liberation Army and the North Vietnamese forces in Laos were continuing in early 1972 at a stepped-up pace both in the northern and southern parts of the country. They were apparently aimed in the north at strengthening their control in the Plain of Jars area; this would further secure the western frontier of North Vietnam and at the same time improve the bargaining position of the NLHS in any political settlement with the Royal Lao Government. In the south the operations were designed to strengthen control of the area traversed by the Ho Chi Minh Trail complex.

Important in the economic field was the devaluation by the Royal Lao Government of the official free market rate of the national currency, the kip (see Glossary). The devaluation, from K500 per US$1 to K600 per US$1, took effect on November 8, 1971.

Foreign Area Studies expresses its deep appreciation for the assistance and contribution to the present study by Dr. Joseph J. Zasloff, who made a thorough review of the initial materials, and by Arthur J. Dommen, who helped greatly to clarify points on which data were incomplete or lacking. The authors are grateful for the special assistance given by Kate Day in providing research materials and to Beth M. Blake for a critical reading of the chapter on social systems. Acknowledgment is also made of the contribution of materials in the early stage of the study by Frank S. Soriano and John O. Weaver.

An appendix, the Geneva Agreement of 1962, around which so many of the domestic and international events associated with Laos have revolved since that date, and a glossary have been included for the reader's convenience. The *Gazetteer of Laos* (1963), containing standard names approved by the United States Board on Geographic Names, prepared by the United States Department of the Interior, has been used as the basic source for the spelling of Laotian place names; however, accent marks have been omitted for Laotian words. English spellings follow those contained in *Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary.*

# COUNTRY SUMMARY

1. COUNTRY: Kingdom of Laos. Landlocked, it borders on Thailand, Burma, People's Republic of China (PRC), Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam), Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam), and the Khmer Republic (Cambodia).

2. GOVERNMENT: Country divided between two rival, de facto political systems—the Royal Lao Government and the communist-dominated Lao Patriotic Front (Neo Lao Hak Sat—NLHS). Royal government area, ruled from Vientiane, was a constitutional monarchy, with the king as head of state and prime minister as head of government (cabinet): legal basis of this government was agreements of 1961 and 1962 by rightist, neutralist, and leftist political groups to form a tripartite coalition. Political situations from the mid-1960s rendered this tripartite framework unworkable. In NLHS area, the rival administration (seated in Samneua) was under the overall direction of the People's Party of Laos (Phak Pasason Lao—PPL), a semisecret communist organization that was under strong North Vietnamese influence in political, economic, and military matters. In spite of opposition to the royal government, the NLHS still recognized the authority of the king as head of state and as a symbol of national unity; royal capital at Luang Prabang.

3. POPULATION: Estimated 3,033,000 (mid-1971). Annual rate of growth between 2.4 and 2.5 percent. Population density, thirty-three persons per square mile (sparse for Southeast Asia), chiefly concentrated in valleys along Mekong River basin and tributaries. Between one-third and one-half total population ethnic Lao (chiefly in lowlands); 10 to 20 percent tribal Tai (living in upland river valleys and plateaus); 20 to 30 percent Lao Theung (Mon-Khmer-speaking hill peoples living on mountain slopes); 10 to 20 percent Lao Sung (Miao-Yao speakers living at altitudes exceeding 3,500 feet). Population in area under Royal Lao Government control approximately two-thirds of total population, primarily ethnic Lao; NLHS area had about one-third of population, 80 percent consisting of minority peoples. More than 10 percent of total population in refugee status in 1971. Strong social and linguistic bonds tie various groups in Laos to ethnically related peoples across international borders.

4. SIZE: 91,428 square miles. Greatest north-south distance, 700 miles; east-west, 275 miles.

5. TOPOGRAPHY: North, roughly three-fifths of total area mostly rugged mountain terrain, but also contains comparatively large Plain of Jars. Southern two-fifths of country, panhandle-shaped, bordered on east by high Annamite Chain and on west by

alluvial plains of Mekong River and tributaries. In south also fertile and extensive Bolovens Plateau. Mountains form barriers to easy contact with eastern, northern, and northwestern neighbors. Mekong River acts as connecting link with Thailand.

6. CLIMATE: Monsoon cycle, with wet season May to October, dry season November to April. Most areas receive at least sixty inches of rain per year.

7. LANGUAGES: Official language is Laotian Tai, or Lao, a dialect of Tai language family; also serves as lingua franca for rural people generally. Many other languages also spoken; these belong to Tai, Mon-Khmer, Miao-Yao, and Tibeto-Burman language families. French spoken by persons with at least secondary school education; small but expanding minority of educated persons speak English. Vietnamese, Chinese, Thai, Indian, and Pakistani minorities, chiefly urban residents, speak their own languages and dialects among themselves.

8. RELIGION: Theravada Buddhism official religion of Kingdom of Laos; is belief of approximately half the population—ethnic Lao and some tribal Tai. Hill peoples subscribe to variety of animistic and ancestor worship cults.

9. EDUCATION: In Royal Lao Government area, six-year primary education system—three years compulsory. General secondary education, seven years. Students go abroad for advanced or specialized education. In 1970 over 210,000 students in public schools. In NLHS areas 60,000 children claimed enrolled in first three grades in 1970; some secondary schools functioning.

10. HEALTH: Life expectancy estimated at from thirty to thirty-five years. High infant mortality rate. Main diseases malaria, trachoma, dysentery, tuberculosis, pneumonia, typhoid, yaws, and hepatitis; malnutrition common.

11. JUSTICE: Legal code essentially unchanged from that introduced by French. Judiciary based on French juridical principles and supervised by the Court of Nullification; subordinate courts included courts of appeal, criminal courts, courts of first instance at the intermediate level, and justices of the peace at lowest level.

12. ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS: Royal Lao Government divided country into sixteen provinces, subdivided into districts, cantons, and villages (district represents lowest level of formal central government authority); five military regions. NLHS divided country into seventeen provinces, with some variation in provincial names from those used by royal government; subdivisions similar to royal government ones.

13. ECONOMY: Least developed economy in Indochina, partly because of unexploited natural resources and partly because of

geographic isolation and rugged topography. Mekong River in initial stages of large-scale development plan.

14. INDUSTRY: Virtually nonexistent. Programs to encourage industrialization planned and undertaken in both Royal Lao Government and NLHS areas.

15. AGRICULTURE: Over 80 percent of labor force engaged in subsistence farming. Agriculture is chief economic activity, but country not self-sufficient in food production. Crop yields low, primarily because of primitive cultivation practices, poor irrigation facilities, and low-yielding varieties of seed.

16. LABOR: Shortages of manpower because of absence of large numbers of young men in armed forces; filled by women and children. Bulk of labor force—largely self-employed and family workers—fully employed only part of year. Manpower scarcities in professional, technical, and skilled categories have required considerable dependence on nonindigenous manpower.

17. FOREIGN TRADE: Royal Lao Government area had very few exports and large trade deficit. Relatively large volume of imports financed largely from foreign aid (United States largest contributor of foreign aid). NLHS major foreign commodity imports mostly from PRC, funneled through North Vietnam; no information on exports.

18. FINANCE: Monetary sector of Royal Lao Government area characterized by chronic trade, payments, and budget deficits. Deficits financed by foreign grants. Besides United States other donors included Japan, United Kingdom, Australia, and France. Separate currency introduced in NLHS area in 1962.

19. COMMUNICATIONS: Civilian telephone service confined to urban areas. First international and domestic long-distance telephone service established in 1967.

20. RAILROADS: None.

21. ROADS: One major artery in Royal Lao Government territory, Highway 13, linked north and south to Vientiane; serviceable only part of year because of monsoon rains. Extensively damaged by hostilities. Roads to east closed. Ho Chi Minh Trail complex in NLHS zone used for military purposes; other roads in NLHS zone bombed frequently.

22. INLAND WATERWAYS: Mekong and its tributaries are important transportation arteries, with port and transshipment facilities along the Mekong. Navigable from Luang Prabang to Savannakhet, but rapids and waterfalls and often narrow channel make navigation difficult and seriously impede traffic. Most of the river craft operate between Vientiane and Luang Prabang.

23. CIVIL AVIATION: Royal Lao Government area has many

small airports, airstrips, runways, and parking aprons. Wattay Airport near Vientiane can accommodate aircraft of major international airlines.

24. INTERNATIONAL MEMBERSHIPS: Member of United Nations and ten specialized agencies. Also participates in several nonmilitary regional organizations, such as Asian Development Bank, Asian and Pacific Council, Colombo Plan for Cooperative Economic Development in South and Southeast Asia, and Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE). Under ECAFE auspices, Laos is member of Mekong River Development Project.

25. INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS AND TREATIES: Signatory to the Protocol to the Declaration on the Neutrality of Laos (July 23, 1962), signed by fourteen nations at Geneva at the conclusion of the International Conference on the Settlement of the Laotian Question, 1961-62. Under this protocol Laos agreed to remain neutral, to refrain from joining any foreign military alliance, and not to permit foreign powers to become militarily involved in Laos in any form.

26. ARMED FORCES: Royal Lao Government forces about 90,000 in 1971; NLHS, about 40,000. All were ground troops except Royal Lao Government's small air and river forces. Additionally, estimated 100,000 North Vietnamese ground troops in NLHS territory in early 1971 (not including troops in transit to Cambodia and South Vietnam); North Vietnamese troop strength varied with operational needs. PRC had from 14,000 to 20,000 troops in northern Laos in road construction and antiaircraft units.

27. INTERNAL SECURITY: Royal Lao Government's Lao National Police over 5,000 men in 1971. Collaborated with armed forces in maintaining internal security, under state of national emergency declared in February 1971. In NLHS area Lao People's Liberation Army responsible for security within system of pervasive political controls.

# LAOS

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

FOREWORD .......... iii

PREFACE .......... v

COUNTRY SUMMARY .......... vii

SECTION I. SOCIAL

Chapter 1. General Character of the Society .......... 1

2. Physical Environment and Population .......... 11
Physical Environment—Boundaries and Administrative Divisions—Settlement Patterns—Population Structure—Population Dynamics

3. Historical Setting .......... 27
Origin of the Lao—The Kingdom of Lan Xang—Period of Lao Fragmentation—The French Colonial Period—World War II and Transition—Independence and Civil War

4. Social Systems .......... 39
Ethnic Configuration—Lao—Tribal Tai—Lao Theung—Meo—Other Tribal Peoples—Resident Foreigners—The War and Society

5. Health, Education, and Welfare .......... 67
Conditions in the Royal Lao Government Area—Conditions in the Lao Patriotic Front-Controlled Area

6. Religion .......... 107
Buddhism—*Phi* Worship—Religious Rites and Festivals—Tribal Religion

Language, Communication, and the Arts .......... 127
Languages—Mass Communications Media—Information from Abroad—The Arts

SECTION II. POLITICAL

Chapter 8. Political System and Values .......... 149
Constitutional Principles—Structure of Government—Territorial Organization—Civil Service—Electoral Machinery—Political Values and Orientations—Images of Nationhood—National Symbols

9. Political Dynamics .......... 165
Framework for Political Competition—Power Structure—Political Parties—The Lao Patriotic Front

10. Foreign Relations .......... 187
The Geneva Conferences—Foreign Relations of the Royal Lao Government—Foreign Relations of the Lao Patriotic Front

SECTION III. ECONOMIC

Chapter 11. Character and Structure of the Economy ..... 209
Structure of the Economy—Economic Development Planning—Currency—Finance—Foreign Exchange Operations Fund—The Financial System in Royal Lao Government Territory
12. Economic Resources ..... 225
Agriculture—Industry—Labor
13. Trade and Transportation ..... 245
Foreign Trade of the Royal Lao Government Area—International Finance of the Royal Lao Government Area—Domestic Trading Conditions in the Royal Lao Government Area—Foreign Commodity Support for the Lao Patriotic Front Area

SECTION IV. NATIONAL SECURITY

Chapter 14. National Defense and Internal Security ..... 261
Armed Forces of the Royal Lao Government—Armed Forces in Laos Hostile to the Royal Lao Government—Internal Security in the Royal Lao Government Area—Security in the Lao Patriotic Front Area

APPENDIX ..... 289

BIBLIOGRAPHY ..... 297

GLOSSARY ..... 321

INDEX ..... 324

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

| Figure | | Page |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | The Kingdom of Laos | xiv |
| 2 | Physical Features of Laos | 13 |
| 3 | Mean Annual Rainfall in Laos | 15 |
| 4 | Laos, Estimated Population Under NLHS Control or in Refugee Status, by Province, from 1970 to Mid-1971 | 25 |
| 5A | Ethnolinguistic Groups of Laos | 39 |
| 5B | Selected Tribal Groups of Laos | 40 |
| 6 | Organization of the Royal Lao Government, 1971 | 151 |
| 7 | Provinces of Laos, as Defined by the Neo Lao Hak Sat, 1971 | 159 |
| 8 | Laos, An Approximation of the Political and Military Organization of the Neo Lao Hak Sat, 1971 | 182 |
| 9 | Organization of the Ministry of National Defense of the Royal Lao Government, 1969 | 265 |
| 10 | Military Regions of Laos, June 1971 | 268 |

# LIST OF TABLES

Table Page

1 Laos, Estimated Population by Age and Sex, 1970 .................. 22
2 Royal Lao Government, Public Schools, Enrollment, and Teachers, by Level of Education, School Year 1969/70 ................ 76
3 Prime Ministers of the Royal Lao Government, 1947-71 .................................................. 168
4 Expenditures and Revenues of the Royal Lao Government, Selected Years, 1964-71 ............................................ 217
5 Exports of the Royal Lao Government Area, by Commodity, 1966-69 . 248
6 Imports of the Royal Lao Government Area, by Commodity, 1966-68 . 249
7 Imports of the Royal Lao Government Area, by Country of Origin, 1966-68 ........................................... 251
8 Exports of the Royal Lao Government Area, by Country of Destination, 1966-69 ........................................ 252
9 Monthly Pay Scale of the Regular Forces of the Royal Lao Government, 1969 .................................... 271

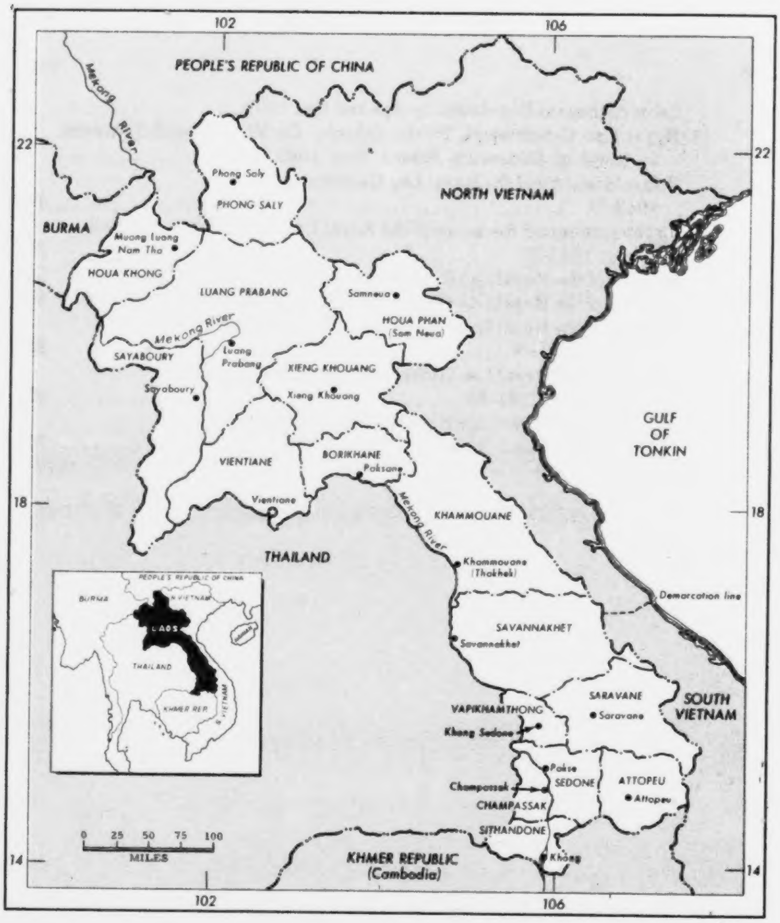

102
106
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA
Mekong River
22
BURMA
Phong Saly
PHONG SALY
NORTH VIETNAM
Muong Luang Nam Tha
HOUA KHONG
LUANG PRABANG
Samneua
HOUA PHAN (Sam Neua)
Mekong River
Luang Prabang
SAYABOURY
Sayaboury
XIENG KHOUANG
Xieng Khouang
GULF OF TONKIN
VIENTIANE
BORIKHANE
Paksane
18
Vientiane
KHAMMOUANE
Mekong River
THAILAND
Khammouane (Thakhek)
Demarcation line
SAVANNAKHET
Savannakhet
SARAVANE
Saravane
SOUTH VIETNAM
VAPIKHAMTHONG
Khong Sedone
Pakse
SEDONE
ATTOPEU
Attopeu
Champassak
CHAMPASSAK
SITHANDONE
Khong
KHMER REPUBLIC (Cambodia)
14
0 25 50 75 100
MILES
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA
BURMA
N. VIETNAM
LAOS
THAILAND
KHMER REP.
S. VIETNAM

*Figure 1. The Kingdom of Laos*

# SECTION I. SOCIAL

## CHAPTER 1

## GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE SOCIETY

The dominant theme in Laotian life in 1971, as it had been throughout the 1960s, particularly during the latter part of the decade, was the armed conflict for control of the country being waged between the opposing forces of the Royal Lao Government on the one side and the insurgent, communist-dominated Lao Patriotic Front (Neo Lao Hak Sat—NLHS) on the other. The principal supporter of the royal government was the United States. Directly aiding the NLHS were the democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam) and, mainly through North Vietnam, the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China (PRC). This struggle for control, which directly or indirectly affected all facets of the society and the economy, showed no signs of abatement.

In human terms the cost of the conflict had been staggering. Tens of thousands of persons had been battle casualties or victims of aerial bombing, and much of the young and middle-aged male population, especially that of the nation's tribal groups, had been decimated. One quarter of the country's estimated 3 million people had been or were refugees—individuals and families who had been forced from their home areas by the fighting or who had fled NLHS areas to royal government-held territory to escape actual or feared imposition of communist-type controls. In terms of economic destruction—towns fought over, captured, lost, recaptured, and destroyed in the process, villages bombed out of existence, crops ungrown, and the loss of manpower in its peak productive years—the cost was equally staggering to the entire nation.

In royal government territory the burden upon the economy merely for administering and paying the regular armed forces and for internal security was exceeding in the early 1970s the government's total domestic revenues. The funds required for the care of large numbers of refugees from the NLHS area, for furnishing the population with the minimum of social services, and for economic development had to be and were being provided by friendly foreign states, again principally the United States.

Although detailed data were lacking, it appeared that in the NLHS area the labor force, regimented along communist lines, was barely maintaining the economy at the subsistence level. Funds from outside were a prerequisite to any substantial improvement or achievement of measurable economic progress. The Lao People's Liberation Army, the military arm of the NLHS, was apparently being provisioned chiefly from rice and other foodstuffs produced in the NLHS area but was completely dependent for military and other supplies on the North Vietnamese; funneled through North Vietnamese channels, many of these supplies were of PRC origin. Without this North Vietnamese assistance it was highly doubtful that the Lao People's Liberation Army could have functioned as an effective fighting force. The major military force in NLHS territory, the North Vietnamese army, was bringing in all its food and materiel; the NLHS economy was as far as was known, unable to furnish any locally produced supplies for it.

The Kingdom of Laos occupies some 91,000 square miles of territory in the heart of the Indochinese peninsula. The country is largely mountainous, except for areas mainly along the Mekong River, which courses through its northern part and then forms much of its boundary with Thailand. The modern state traces its origin back to the ancient Lao kingdom of Lan Xang. Lan Xang flourished from the mid-fourteenth century—with one brief period of Burmese domination in the late 1500s—to the end of the seventeenth century, when it broke up into the separate kingdoms of Luang Prabang, Vientiane, and Champassak. During the ensuing century and a half Siam (predecessor of present-day Thailand) gradually gained ascendency over the three states as well as over the independent Lao kingdom of Xieng Khouang.

In the late 1800s French colonial advances into Indochina brought withdrawal of the Siamese and, in 1899, union of the four kingdoms under French suzerainty into a single new political unit, to which was given the name of Laos. The son of the king of Luang Prabang at that time, a direct descendant of the Lan Xang royal line, became the hereditary head of Laos in 1946; his son, Savang Vatthana, held the throne in 1971.

French rule was largely indirect. A small elite group composed of Lao princely and traditionally prominent families was permitted to keep much of its power as well as its social position, although Vietnamese administrators were in many cases interposed between the French colonial administration and the Laotians.

In 1941 Laos was occupied by the Japanese. At the end of World War II a nationalist movement led by various members of the Lao elite declared the nation's independence from France. French forces soon reoccupied the country, but in 1949 France recognized Laos as an independent state within the French Union, and in 1953 full sovereignty was granted.

A constitution adopted in 1947, before independence, established Laos as a constitutional monarchy; this constitution, as amended, was still in effect in Royal Lao Government territory in 1971. It provided for a parliamentary form of government with a popularly elected National Assembly empowered to enact laws and to oversee the executive branch. At the top of the executive branch was a cabinet, formed by a prime minister who was appointed by the king after consultation with the country's political leaders. The central government appointed provincial authorities and their subordinates. In general, the National Assembly was the weaker element in the royal government administration and, at least in 1971, wielded little power.

The power structure in the NLHS area, insofar, as was known in 1971, resembled that found generally in communist-controlled countries. Policy matters were in the hands of the communist, semisecret People's Party of Laos. This party, through an interlocking leadership scheme, controlled and directed the Central Committee and presidium of NLHS.

In the royal government the same Lao elite group, or its descendants, that had maintained its position and power during the French colonial period continued to be prominent. Its members held practically all high political, civil service, and military positions and dominated both social and economic life in royal government territory. Lao princely and mandarinate families who had joined the NLHS were also highly placed. In contrast, however, to the general situation in the royal government-controlled area, a number of tribal chieftains and minority leaders, as well as various persons from more modest backgrounds, were included in the leadership group. The NLHS area was 80 percent minority peoples. The NLHS leadership group was more cohesive and closely knit than its counterpart in the royal government's hierarchy.

The civil warfare raging in the country first started not long after the country's acquisition of full independence. In 1950 the communist Free Lao Front (which later became the NLHS) was formed in Viet Minh-held territory in Vietnam; it claimed to be the free government of Laos. Its military force, the Pathet Lao (known since 1965 as the Lao People's Liberation Army), aided by Viet Minh troops, entered Laos in 1953 and seized control of the country's northeastern province of Houa Phan. Other units secured virtual control of Phong Saly Province in the far north.

Since that time two major international conferences have attempted to restore domestic peace to the country. The first, the Geneva Conference of 1954, managed to bring the two sides together, and after protracted negotiations a brief, uneasy period of peace existed from 1957 to 1958 under the aegis of the coalition Government of National Union.

Fighting again broke out between the two sides in 1959; however, the domestic picture was greatly altered in 1960 by the introduction of a third political force—the neutralist—through a military coup headed by Kong Le, who demanded that all parties get together and establish Laos as a neutral state. At the end of 1960 Kong Le was ousted from Vientiane by rightist military forces purporting to represent the Royal Lao Government. He thereupon entered into a tacit alliance with the Pathet Lao and jointly began an offensive—aided by supplies provided directly by the Soviet Union and by North Vietnamese army units—that posed a threat of takeover of the entire country.

The issue attained international importance when the United States declared that it would intervene directly, if necessary, to prevent any such takeover by the communist-neutralist alliance. The result was the second Geneva Conference of 1962. Consideration was not given to dividing Laos according to the pattern of North Vietnam and South Vietnam because of the existence of a strong middle neutralist force in Laos and general Laotian desires for a neutral coalition government. The final result of the conference was a thirteen-nation guarantee of Laotian neutrality. The new coalition Provisional Government of National Union was formed in 1962. It was headed by neutralist Prince Souvanna Phouma, with rightist General Phoumi Nosavan and Prince Souphanouvong, head of the NLHS, as deputy prime ministers.

Fighting flared up anew, this time between neutralists and Pathet Lao forces in 1963. In 1964 a one-day, rightist-backed military coup resulted in the ouster of Souvanna Phouma but saw his almost immediate restoration with the aid of rightist elements. Subsequently the NLHS claimed that Souvanna's prime ministership was illegal. The domestic political situation was further complicated by an unsuccessful right-wing attempt at takeover of the government in 1965, which resulted in the flight of the main right-wing leaders into exile.

In the mid-1960s the NLHS refused to participate in national elections conducted by the Provisional Government of National Union, and beginning in the late 1960s warfare between the two sides increased greatly in intensity. Nonetheless, sporadic calls for a meaningful new rapprochement were made from time to time by both Souvanna Phouma and Souphanouvong; in 1971 the Provisional Government of National Union continued to exist in theory, its tripartite appearance maintained on the surface by neutralist representation through Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma, some rightist presence in the cabinet, and a deputy prime ministership open for, but not physically occupied by, NLHS leader Prince Souphanouvong.

The NLHS, however, claimed that the royal government was actually rightist controlled and not really tripartite and continued to call for a new conference of all interested parties to set up a provisional government that would govern until elections could be held from which "a true union government could emerge." In view of the actual situation, however, prospects for the formation of a genuine union government appeared to be slight, until the entire problem of Indochina was resolved at the international level.

The increasing tempo of war in neighboring Vietnam, from about the mid-1960s, brought increased use of Laotian territory by North Vietnam (although it was a signatory of the 1962 Geneva neutralist agreements) for the movement of troops and supplies to support its operations and those of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam against the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam). At the same time, in order to protect its supply routes (the Ho Chi Minh Trail complex), North Vietnam introduced large numbers of its troops into Laos and, further, furnished supplies to the NLHS forces. These actions, aimed at seizing and holding areas through which the trail network ran, appeared intended as well to strengthen and enlarge NLHS-held areas. In response the royal government turned to the United States. The result was massive United States matériel and air support of the royal government forces and, in its own interests, the intensive bombing of the trail network in an effort to interdict the flow of North Vietnamese matériel and manpower into South Vietnam.

In 1971 royal government forces held only about one-third of the national territory, and the NLHS held about two-thirds. Almost two-thirds of the population, however, including refugees, were living in royal government areas. This population, as well as the one-third in NLHS zones, was ethnically highly diverse.

The Lao, constituting perhaps one-third to one-half of the population, were mostly found in the Royal Lao Government area, where they dominated the Mekong River valley and the alluvial plains of its main tributaries. They were Theravada Buddhists and were primarily engaged in subsistence irrigated-rice farming. The remainder of the population, of various linguistic and cultural affiliations, occupied mainly the upper river valleys and the mountainous regions. They were primarily adherents of tribal religions. Many were slash-and-burn-cultivators. Four-fifths of the population of the NLHS area consisted of these non-Lao peoples.

This ethnic diversity, the multiplicity of mutually unintelligible languages, difficult terrain and poor communications, and the low literacy rate tended to hinder the development of a sense of national unity and social cohesion. Moreover, centrifugal forces existed in strong allegiances connecting various ethnic groups in both royal government and NLHS areas with related ethnic communities living across their international borders; for example, the Lao, in many instances, felt far closer ties with the large Lao population in northeastern Thailand than they did with other ethnic groups within their own country.

Strong local allegiances also existed that took precedence over national ones. To some extent these had been intensified by the insecurity that the war had brought. Thus in 1971 after less than two decades of independent existence, there was still little evidence of any establishment of primacy to allegiance to the nation over ethnic and other particularistic loyalties.

Socially the impingement of new ideas and ideologies was bringing changes in both royal government and NLHS areas. The large-scale United States aid program and aid programs of other friendly nations have brought new values and institutions in Royal Lao Government territory. Community development schemes directed by foreign advisers, for example, have introduced many Laotians to modern ideas and ways of doing things with the result that such age-old attitudes as traditional and unquestioning respect of the villager for the central government bureaucracy have been altered.

Even greater change appears to have occurred in NLHS areas. Definite efforts seemed to be underway to reorganize Laotian society along Marxist-Leninist lines. Communist cadres were reported to be mobilizing and organizing the people to fit in with, and support the programs and policies of, the NLHS. In the process they were employing methods of persuasion, coercion, and social control borrowed from North Vietnam and other communist models.

Laos as a whole was the least urbanized country in Indochina. The principal urbanized areas lie along the Mekong River in Royal Lao Government-controlled territory, giving that part of the country a substantially higher urban population than NLHS areas. Vientiane, the Royal Lao Government administrative capital, was the largest city, having a population of about 150,000 inhabitants. Luang Prabang, the traditional royal and religious center, had one-sixth of that number. Urban manpower shortages, a growing demand for industrial labor, and movement of refugees had generated a significant trend toward the towns in royal government territory even before the early 1970s. As a result, urban centers there were growing at an average rate three times that of the population generally.

The economy in the area under royal government control was still based on subsistence agriculture, and most of the nonrefugee population lived in traditional self-contained agricultural villages. Industrialization was as yet in an elementary stage, and manufacturing was confined almost entirely to the production of consumer goods. Only about one-quarter of the labor force was in the monetized sector; this sector, almost entirely urban, was growing rapidly, however, at a rate only slightly less than the urbanization rate.

Communities in NLHS territory were mostly self-contained agricultural villages. There were indications that efforts were being made to maintain such communities or groups of associated families on a self-sufficient basis. Eventual communization of society appeared to be the NLHS goal, but circumstances—the possibly detrimental political effects of too rapid change and difficulties in modernizing caused by lack of domestic resources, skilled labor, and investment funds (which would have to come from foreigh sources)—had resulted in an apparently more moderate immediate approach to achieving that ultimate aim. A slow trend toward establishment of mutual aid teams and cooperative management in agriculture (preliminary steps through which other Asian communist countries have introduced collectivization) was reported, but in 1971 no actual collectivization seemed to have occurred.

Some controls on private trade and distribution of commodities have been introduced, and local cooperatives in the commercial field operating under NLHS control have been established. Efforts to restrict conspicuous consumption by the more wealthy have occurred, but no large-scale expropriations of property or goods were known.

Both the Royal Lao Government and the NLHS had economic development plans in operation, each constituting a step aimed at attainment of eventual economic viability by their respective economies. The royal government's five-year plan (1969-74) had made some progress by mid-1971, notably on construction of the Nam Ngum River Dam and development of the Vientiane Plain. Increases in agricultural production had also been recorded, but the call on government resources for defense after stepped-up NLHS military action beginning in 1969 and increased security risks in some project areas slowed down achievement of plan goals.

The NLHS, for its part, reported that it had implemented a three-year economic plan (during the 1968-70 period). It asserted that considerable success had been attained in expanding land under cultivation and agricultural production. Progress was also claimed in establishing new industries—basically small-scale plants and handicraft establishments turning out consumer goods and agricultural tools—and in increasing industrial production.

The entire country lacked an adequate transportation system. There were no railroads, and the existing road network in the early 1970s did not effectively connect a majority of the towns in either the Royal Lao Government area or the NLHS zone. The principal transportation route in the royal government area was the Mekong River; extensive use was also made of air transportation for both passengers and freight. The Mekong was paralleled by a major highway extending from the Cambodian border northward to Luang Prabang. Occasional destruction of bridges by NLHS forces and the security situation usually made use of parts of this road hazardous.

Poor transportation facilities have caused domestic trade in Royal Lao Government territory to be largely regionalized, with little interregional movement of commodities; this situation has been compounded by military actions. In rural areas most trade is by barter. International trade has consistently shown a large deficit, which is financed by foreign aid. The mechanism for financing this external trade deficit (the Foreign Exchange Operations Fund) has simultaneously been employed for funding the royal government's budget deficit. The system since its inception in 1964 has successfully reduced the rate of growth of prices in Vientiane to an impressively low level.

The country's landlocked nature affects the movement of goods in international commerce. NLHS occupation of the entire eastern part of the national territory made useless for this purpose in 1971 the major roads that connect important towns along the Mekong with points in North and South Vietnam. The military situation in Cambodia also affected shipments through that country. As of 1971, therefore, almost all royal government area international trade passed through Thailand.

Transportation conditions in NLHS territory were not definitely known. The famed Ho Chi Minh Trail complex was presumably being used exclusively, or almost exclusively, for the transportation of military supplies. Main roads ordinarily used for commercial traffic were being bombed to prevent the movement of men and supplies to NLHS forces atttacking or building up attacks on government units. In the far north several roads had been constructed by the PRC under agreements with the royal government. They apparently remained in Communist Chinese hands in 1971, and there was evidence that they were being used for foreign commodity support from the PRC to the NLHS area.

In the social field, improvement in general health standards was taking place in royal government areas as the result of government and foreign assistance programs. For most of the population, however, medical care was furnished by local herb doctors and was, by even modest Western standards, inadequate. The United States has provided some modern medical facilities, but most medical aid funds have of necessity been used for assistance to refugees. Many refugees, largely ethnic Lao, have been integrated into the royal government area's economy on a self-sufficient basis—chiefly in the vicinity of the principal commercial centers—but large numbers, composed mostly of hill tribes, were still housed in centers in 1971 and constituted an unsolved problem.

Scattered medical facilities were reported in the NLHS zone. Medical care for the Lao People's Liberation Army seemed to be adequate. North Vietnamese forces in NLHS territory had their own medical staffs; they were reported to be treating some Laotian civilians as well. North Vietnam was also reported to be furnishing medical supplies and assisting in the training of medical personnel. The actual extent of medical care of civilians in the NLHS area, however, was unknown.

There was a strong demand for education in royal government areas, especially among the ethnic Lao. The demand generally exceeded facilities, but government, outside aid, and self-help construction projects were helping to alleviate the situation. More educational opportunities were available in urban than in rural areas. They were mainly the prerogative of the young male population; attitudes toward the education of females were changing rapidly, however. Primary education was largely national in character. At the secondary level it remained essentially French, although vigorous efforts were underway to give it a more national orientation.

In NLHS areas strong efforts have been reported, since 1967, to expand education, chiefly at the primary level. Strong efforts were also being made to eliminate adult illiteracy in the villages. North Vietnamese influence in NLHS education was pervasive, and a large number of Laotians were reported to be acquiring secondary education in North Vietnam. The major goal of education in the NLHS zone was to change societal patterns to conform with communist concepts, and Marxist-Leninist doctrine was an integral part of all studies. A secondary, but likewise important objective, was to provide much-needed administrators and technicians.

# CHAPTER 2

# PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT AND POPULATION

The Kingdom of Laos is a landlocked, largely mountainous country lying in the heart of the Indochinese peninsula (see fig. 1). It is located entirely in the tropics—its southern tip being about fourteen degrees north of the equator and its most northerly point being just slightly below the Tropic of Cancer. It is bordered on the east by the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam) and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam), on the north by the People's Republic of China, and on the northwest by Burma. The western border is bounded by Thailand, and the southern border by the Khmer Republic (Cambodia).

The country has an area of 91,428 square miles, of which less than three-fifths is contained in the northern section of the country and over two-fifths in the country's southern panhandle. The highly mountainous nature and elevations in the northern part, as well as in much of the Annamite Chain extending the length of the panhandle, long acted as barriers to communication with the countries lying to the north, northwest, and east. The Mekong River on the west, however, has served as a link with related peoples of Thailand and with Cambodia.

The country has two seasons that are largely determined by the direction of monsoonal winds that blow over Southeast Asia. Moisture-laden winds from the southwest bring a rainy period lasting for about half the year, which is followed by a roughly equal dry period as monsoonal land winds from the northeast blow over the area. Temperatures are usually high during most of the year. Humidities are also usually high, although they drop somewhat during the dry period. Forests occupy some two-thirds of the country. Forest types are mainly moist tropical and dry monsoonal, depending largely on the total amount of rain received and the length of the area's rainy season.

The population of Laos was estimated to be approximately 3,033,000 in mid-1971. With only thirty-three persons per square mile, it was one of the most sparsely populated countries in Southeast Asia. Most Laotians lived in farming areas in the Mekong River basin and along the banks of its tributaries. Provisional censuses showed that the five largest cities, including Vientiane, together had a population of less than 300,000. The civil war and a massive influx of refugees from tribal areas, as well as the effect of expanded government services and foreign assistance programs, were however, speeding the process of urbanization (see ch. 4, Social Systems).

The fighting in Laos has created a major refugee problem. The migration of refugees from regions in the northern and eastern parts of the country under control of the communist-dominated Lao Patriotic Front (Neo Lao Hak Sat—NLHS, see Glossary) had included a cumulative total from 1962 until April 1971 of over 700,000 residents of Laos who have been displaced at least once and, at some time or other, have been on the refugee rolls.

## PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

### Topography

The northern section of the country lying above the Laotian panhandle is characterized by rugged mountain terrain (see fig. 2). This terrain is a continuation of the folded mountains that sweep generally southward into Southeast Asia from eastern Tibet. The main ranges trend chiefly northeast to southwest. Their mountains are sharp crested and steep sloped, and the slopes are greatly dissected. Valleys are V-shaped, and there are many narrow gorges; adjacent crests rise 2,000 to 4,000 feet above valley floors. Several ranges are around 5,000 feet in height, and many peaks are well over 6,000 feet. The country's highest mountain, Phou Bia, rising to 9,249 feet above sea level, is situated in Xieng Khouang Province in this northern section. This section also contains a number of scattered relatively large hill areas that are moderately to highly dissected; the hills usually have rounded tops.

A prominent feature of the northern part of the country is the comparatively large plain, known as the Plain of Jars, located on the Tran Ninh Plateau in Xieng Khouang Province. The plateau, lying mostly between about 3,330 and 4,000 feet above sea level, has relatively infertile soils and, in 1971, was economically unimportant. The Plain of Jars, a term applying correctly to only a part of the plateau and derived from prehistoric large stone jars found in the area, however, has become well known since the early 1960s as the site of periodic fighting between the forces of the Royal Lao Government and of the Lao People's Liberation Army (see Glossary) (see ch. 9, Political Dynamics; ch. 10, Foreign Relations; ch. 14, National Defense and Internal Security).

The chief topographic feature of the Laotian panhandle is the Annamite Chain, which runs along the entire eastern side of this section of the country. The chain extends northwest to southeast, paralleling the direction of flow of the Mekong River. In its upper portion, mountains resemble those in northern Laos, having rugged peaks and deep valleys; peaks are from about 5,000 to 8,000 feet in elevation. In general, this portion of the chain presents a formidable barrier to movement between Laos and North Vietnam.

In central-east Khammouane Province elevations are somewhat

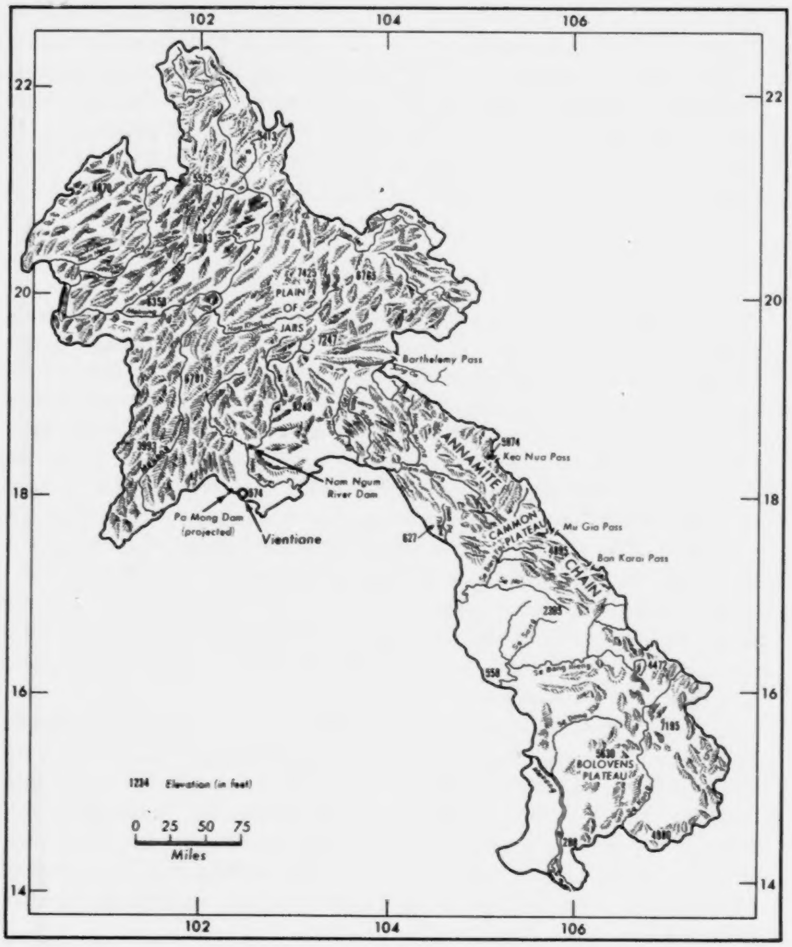

102
104
106
22
20
18
16
14
5413
5525
7425
PLAIN OF JARS
6765
7247
Barthelemy Pass
ANNAMITE
5874
Keo Nua Pass
Nam Ngum River Dam
Pa Mong Dam (projected)
Vientiane
627
CAMMON PLATEAU
Mu Gia Pass
Ban Karai Pass
CHAIN
558
4477
7185
BOLOVENS PLATEAU
1234 Elevation (in feet)
0 25 50 75
Miles

*Figure 2. Physical Features of Laos*

lower, and passes allow easier crossing. Farther south, at about the latitude of the city of Khammouane, the chain enters a limestone region characterized by steep ridges and peaks, sinkholes, and disappearing streams. Then on a line roughly parallel with the demilitarized zone between North and South Vietnam, a comparatively flat area occurs, through which travel is relatively easy. From this point to the southern end of Laos the chain again becomes very rugged, and its elevations rise to 6,500 feet; the high point is over 7,500 feet.

At the neck of the panhandle section the Annamite Chain extends to the Mekong River. Below this the mountains are buttressed to the west by several plateaus, the best known being the Cammon Plateau in Khammouane Province. The terrain is a generally rolling plain. From the plateaus the land slopes more gently westward to the alluvial plains along the Mekong. Prominent in the southern part of the country is the fertile Bolovens Plateau. Almost encircled by a high escarpment, the plateau has an elevation of about 3,500 feet. Its terrain is also generally rolling, and there are large patches of grassland.

## Climate

The climate of Laos is primarily influenced by the monsoon winds that govern conditions in all eastern Asia from India to Kamchatka in eastern Siberia. The monsoon cycle results from changes in the seasonal flow of air over the vast Asian landmass and the oceans to the south and east. In winter dry air over the continent becomes cold and dense, settles, and flows generally southward. From its prevailing direction in the Indochinese peninsula, this winter airflow is called the Northeast Monsoon. In summer the situation is reversed. The continental air becomes warm, rises, and creates a great low pressure area into which airmasses from the seas flow. These masses, heavily laden with moisture picked up in passing over the oceans, precipitate this moisture on reaching the continent. From the direction of flow the winds thus created are called the Southwest Monsoon.

This cycle results in two distinct seasons: a wet season during the Southwest Monsoon, from May to October, and a dry season during the Northeast Monsoon, from November to April. In July and August, the months of maximum precipitation, rain may fall steadily for several days at a time. As the wet season nears its end, the rain tapers off and may fall only in the morning and the evening. Gradually it dwindles and then ceases entirely; by mid-November rain is rare.

The average annual rainfall varies considerably in different parts of the country, however, most areas receive more than sixty inches a year (see fig. 3). Precipitation is over 120 inches annually along the Annamite Chain. The Bolovens Plateau has the heaviest rainfall—more than 160 inches a year. The lowest average annual rainfall is recorded in parts of northern Laos where the range is about fifty to sixty inches—Luang Prabang in this region has an average annual rainfall of about fifty-two inches. Rainfall usually occurs at least 100 days a year in most of the country and in some areas as many as 150 days or more. Days with rain, however, are concentrated in the wet season when usually over ten to more than twenty days a month have rain. In the dry season there are a few days a month, if any, during which there is rain.

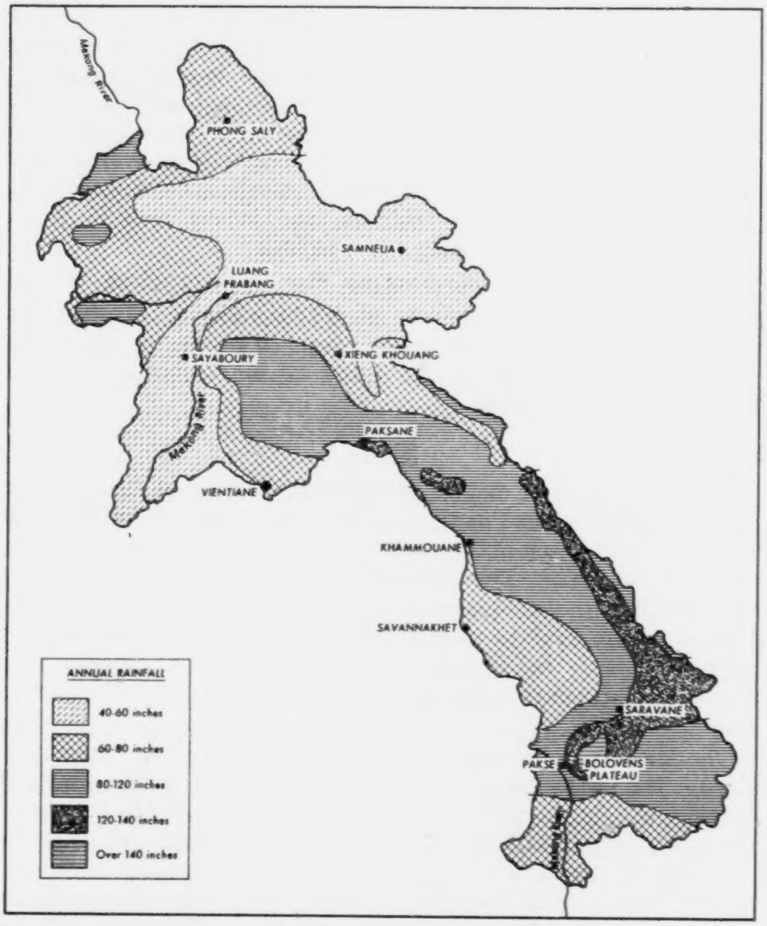

Mekong River
PHONG SALY
SAMNEUA
LUANG PRABANG
SAYABOURY
XIENG KHOUANG
Mekong River
PAKSANE
VIENTIANE
KHAMMOUANE
SAVANNAKHET
SARAVANE
PAKSE
BOLOVENS PLATEAU
Mekong River
ANNUAL RAINFALL
40-60 inches
60-80 inches
80-120 inches
120-140 inches
Over 140 inches

*Figure 3. Mean Annual Rainfall in Laos*

The backup of floodwaters of the Mekong during the rainy season into the basins of tributaries and the flooding of the tributaries themselves assure enough moisture for cultivating wet rice in lowland areas, where rainfall alone is not sufficient for the purpose. These floodwaters, as well as rainfall, are impounded, utilizing chiefly only the paddy dikes. Above flood levels water for the growing rice plants comes either from the rainwater itself or by the diversion of upstream waters through small, locally constructed trenches.

Temperatures are affected by altitude, latitude, and the monsoons. The highest temperatures occur in March and April just before the rains begin. At this time the mean maximum temperature at lower altitudes rises into the mid-nineties (degrees Fahrenheit); absolute highs of well over 100° F occur. During the rainy season temperatures are usually in the mid-eighties. During the colder part of the dry season (December to February) mean minimum temperatures range in the fifties and sixties over much of the country, with perhaps a 20° F daily variation. During this time absolute lows occur in the thirties, and in the area of Xieng Khouang lows below freezing are recorded.

Nighttime humidity percentages rise into, or close to, the nineties throughout the year in much of the country. During the dry season the humidity drops to about 50 percent in the early afternoon. Percentages in the rainy season, however, usually remain in the seventies.

### Rivers

The Mekong River and its tributaries drain all of Laos except parts of eastern Houa Phan Province and northern Xieng Khouang Province that lie east of the main mountain divide; these drain into the Gulf of Tonkin. The Mekong is the center of the country's economic life. Its flood plains provide the major wet-rice lands; its waters furnish fish, the main protein element in the diet; and the system carries the pirogues, sampans, and light barges that transport the country's freight. All of the larger towns are on or near its banks.

The Mekong borders on, or flows through, Laos for more than 1,000 miles. In the northern part of the country it is characterized by narrow valleys and deep gorges. Downstream from Vientiane the valley widens, and alluvial plains of varying width are found on each side. The river is navigable from Luang Prabang to Savannakhet. Downstream from Savannakhet, formidable rapids extend for more than eighty miles but are passable at high water. In the extreme south the double falls of Khone are impassable at all times.

The Mekong's tributaries in the north include the Nam Tha and the Nam Ou, which flow in deep, narrow valleys. Both, however, offer some possibilities for water travel by small craft, and both contain alluvial pockets where wet rice can be cultivated. A major tributary draining part of northern Laos is the Nam Ngum, which enters the Mekong east of Vientiane through an alluvial plain. The Nam Ngum is the site of an important power project that was under construction in mid-1971—under the country's 1969-74 development plan (see ch. 12, Economic Resources).

Below the bend of the Mekong east of Vientiane where the river turns southward, the tributaries generally empty through relatively level alluvial plains for the last forty or fifty miles of their courses. The main tributaries in this part of the country are the Nam Kading, Se Bang Fai, Se Bang Hieng, and Se Done. Another large tributary, the Se Kong, which drains southeast Laos, joins the Mekong inside Cambodia.

### Flora and Fauna

Precipitation, temperature, and soil conditions in general combine to make Laos a land of tropical forests with over 58,000 square miles, or close to two-thirds of the country, covered with forests. Dense, moist forest covers more than 21,000 square miles; open, drier woodland (dry monsoonal forest), nearly 36,000 square miles. Coniferous woodlands account for over 1,000 square miles.

The dense, moist forests consist of two types: a subhumid tropical forest of broad-leaved evergreens found mostly in the north and a moist monsoonal forest that occurs principally in the southern part of the country. The moist monsoonal forests contain a mixture of evergreens and broad-leaved deciduous trees. Rainfall in the areas occupied by these forest types is heavy during much of the year. The intervening "dry" season is relatively short—two to three months in duration—with the climate remaining humid during this period and the soil staying moist.

The moist forests are layered. The tree crowns of the upper tier form a continuous canopy ranging from about eighty-five to 110 feet above the forest floor. Taller noncontiguous trees (emergents) rise above this layer. For the major part of their height the trunks of both emergents and trees in the upper layer rise straight and relatively branchless. Below this upper layer is a second canopy of tree crowns at about forty-five to sixty feet above the ground. Vegetation below this second tier varies in size. Woody creepers (lianas), which may be several hundred feet long, grow upward to the upper tree crowns, and the limbs of trees provide support for orchids, ferns, and various epiphytes. Many of these forests in 1971 consisted of secondary growth as the result of excessive cutting, shifting agriculture, and fires.

The open, dry monsoonal forest covers areas with more pronounced dry seasons lasting for about five months. The trees are small to medium in size, and the dominant ones reach about forty-five to sixty-five feet in height. Individual trees, however, may be taller, especially where soil conditions are favorable. They are usually farther apart than in the moist forest, with crowns either separate or just about touching. Most species are deciduous, and during the dry period the monsoonal forest has a stark, bare appearance. Lianas, ferns, and epiphytes are scarce. A tall coarse grass used for thatching forms much of the ground cover, although in some places a dense, thorny, impenetrable underbrush occurs.

Recent slash-and-burn agriculture has considerably changed some areas naturally covered by dry monsoonal forest (see ch. 12, Economic Resources). Abandoned plots are characterized by a secondary growth usually dominated by bamboo, scrub trees, and wild banana.

Open woodlands consisting predominantly of pines are found in several parts of the country. About one-sixth of the total pine forests are located in the north-central part of the country; about half of these are pure stands. They occur chiefly in Khammouane, Sayaboury, Vientiane, and Xieng Khouang provinces; some stands occur on the Plain of Jars and on the Cammon Plateau.

Dense stands of bamboo are found in the northern part of the country where the forest cover has been removed by cutting, clearing, or burning. Heights of plants range from less than twenty feet to over ninety feet. Bamboo also occur as part of the understory in both moist evergreen and monsoonal forests and in dry monsoonal woodlands.

Grass and wooded savanna occupy about 6,000 square miles of country. In some areas they occur as distinct patches, as on the Bolovens Plateau and the Plain of Jars. In others they are intermingled with forested land—in the north usually on mountain and hill slopes, and in plains areas in the south. Grasses generally predominate, accompanied by herbaceous plants and scattered shrubs and, in the case of wooded savanna, by widely dispersed small trees. Wooded savanna may blend into open forest. Many of the savannas appear to have resulted from repeated cutting or burning over a long period of time of forest tracts for shifting agricultural use. In some cases, however, savannas seem to have developed because of poor local soil conditions that are unsuitable for forest growth.

The country has a wealth of wildlife. The largest animal is the elephant, which is captured and trained as a beast of burden. There are also numbers of tigers, as well as smaller cats, leopards, gaur (wild ox), wild buffalo, bear, and various deer. Small animals include hares, monkeys, and squirrels. Common birds are cranes, partridges, peafowl, pheasants, and ducks. The Mekong River and its tributaries are the main sources of food fish. Common species include carp, catfish, mullet, and perch.

### Natural Resources

The country has a variety of minerals, but only preliminary surveys have been made and further studies have been affected by the unsettled conditions. The most important mineral being mined in 1971 was tin. Other known minerals included coal, iron, copper, gold, lead, phosphorite, salt, and zinc ores. Precious stones are also found.

The rivers represent an enormous potential for water storage and hydroelectric power. Small, locally constructed takeoff ditches for irrigating rice paddies made some use of this, but the main potential had not yet been tapped in the early 1970s (see ch. 12, Economic Resources).

## BOUNDARIES AND ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS

Laos has a total land frontier of 3,162 miles, which is shared with North and South Vietnam (1,324 miles), the People's Republic of China (264 miles), Burma (148 miles), Thailand (1,090 miles), and Cambodia (336 miles). These boundaries are based on lines determined during the French period of administration of Indochina (see ch. 3, Historical Setting). In 1971 the Laotian side of part of the boundary with North and South Vietnam, with mainland China, and with Burma were under the control of the Laotian Communists. The only boundary dispute has been with North Vietnam. This involved an area in Laos to the west of the Demilitarized Zone in Vietnam, occupied and claimed by North Vietnam in the 1950s. The state of this dispute was unknown in 1971.

In general, the originally established border alignments follow natural features. The border with Vietnam recognized by the Royal Lao Government was largely determined by French administrative action during the colonial period. It coincides for most of its extent with east-west water divides formed by the Annamite Chain and by mountains in northwest Laos. The existing Laos-Cambodia border also seems to have been determined by French administrative action.

The border with Thailand is based on various conventions between the French and Siamese (later Thai) governments. The Mekong River delimits 600 miles of this boundary, and the remainder is defined by water divides and tributaries of the Mekong. The Laos-Burma border was delimited in the late 1800s by agreement between French and British colonial administrations. The entire border follows the Mekong River. The Laos-China frontier is based on treaties and conventions determined by the Chinese empire and France in the late 1800s and on a subsequent convention with the Chinese Nationalist Government that was ratified in 1935.

Internally, the country was divided by the Royal Lao Government in 1971, into sixteen provinces (*khoueng*) (see fig. 1). Each province was further divided into a number of districts (*muong*), and these in turn were subdivided into cantons (*tasseng*). The Lao

Patriotic Front (Neo Lao Hak Sat—NLHS), on the other hand, subdivided the country into seventeen provinces (see ch. 8, Political System and Values).

## SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

Settlement is densest in the Mekong River lowlands, In the sparsely settled highlands inhabitants practice a shifting agriculture that requires them to move periodically to new lands where they relocate their villages. Near the northern and eastern borders the terrain is so rugged that there is almost no population.

The location and size of the villages are determined primarily by natural conditions, but cultural and historical circumstances also play a role. Villages are organized on an ethnic basis, and the least culturally advanced groups have settled in the higher reaches of the mountains. Fairly easy communication between villages in the lowlands is possible by river, road, trail, or path, but in mountainous areas communication routes are limited.

Most lowland villages are located above flood level near a river or stream and frequently at the confluence of the two. Those not on a waterway are usually sited along a main road. Lowland villages are permanent and may range from five or six households to several hundred, with populations of fifty to 2,000 persons. A clearing, or street, with dwellings on both sides frequently divides the village; older villages may have an entrance from the watercourse marked by posts or a kind of gate.

Every village that can support one has a Buddhist *wat* (see Glossary) with at least one monk and several novices (see ch. 6, Religion). The *wat* serves as the focal point for all village-wide activities. A village too small to maintain its own *wat* is not considered to be a really complete community.

## POPULATION STRUCTURE

As of mid-1971 no regular census had ever been taken in Laos. Figures compiled by the government were based on counts made by village chiefs, with little or no verification or control at the various reporting levels. Data from inaccessible regions either were omitted from the totals or were estimated on the basis of previous figures or those from nearby areas. The nomadic activities of certain tribal groups engaged in slash-and-burn agriculture and the lack of civil authority in some areas affected by military activity created additional difficulties. The official population estimate for 1970 was 2,962,000. Government estimates indicate that the population, which is one of the smallest of any country in continental Southeast Asia, is increasing at a rate of about 2.4 to 2.5 percent a year.

A little over one-half of the population is concentrated along the Mekong River and its tributaries, where population density ranges between twenty-five and 130 persons per square mile. Three provinces—Savannakhet, Luang Prabang, and Vientiane—constituting about 31 percent of the country's total area, have the largest populations and together contain about 39 percent of the total population. Over 15 percent of the population lives in the southwestern provinces of Sithandone, Champassak, Sedone, and Vapikhamthong, which constitute about 7 percent of the total area of the country. These rice-growing areas have densities exceeding sixty persons a square mile. In the more inaccessible mountainous areas of northern and eastern Laos, population density is less than three persons a square mile.

Forty-four cities and towns are classified officially as urban areas. In 1970 they had an estimated population of 512,500 persons, or slightly over 17 percent of the national total. The urban centers, which have been expanding rapidly in the late 1960s and early 1970s, are located chiefly in the alluvial plain of the Mekong River; the remainder are in the plateau regions and river valleys in both north and south. About 9 percent of the total population lives in the five largest cities: Vientiane and Luang Prabang in northern Laos and Khammouane, Savannakhet, and Pakse in the panhandle section. Vientiane, the administrative capital, is the largest city in the country, with a population of over 150,000, and Luang Prabang, the royal capital, with a population of over 25,000, has been surpassed in size by Pakse (about 37,200) and Savannakhet (about 39,000). Khammouane has a population of over 13,000.

The ethnically complex composition of the population is dominated by the Lao, who constitute between 35 and 50 percent of the population (see ch. 4, Social Systems). The tribal Tai, who include a number of subgroups, make up perhaps 10 to 20 percent of the population. They engage in wet rice culture, like the Lao, and live in mountain valleys and plateaus of the northern and central regions. The largest of the minority groups are the Lao Theung (see (Glossary), whose ancestors are believed to have lived in Laos earlier than the rest of the population. Widely distributed, the Lao Theung include a great number of small and culturally diverse tribal elements. These groups constitute roughly 20 to 30 percent of the population. Perhaps the largest single group of Lao Theung are the Khmu, estimated at about 3 to 4 percent of the total population. Most are dry rice farmers in the mountainous areas and practice shifting agriculture.

Probably next in size are the Meo, one of the groups of the Lao Sung (see Glossary). The Meo arrived from China in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Locating themselves high on mountain slopes centered in Xieng Khouang Province, they also engage in shifting agriculture. The Meo, together with other Lao Sung people, constitute 10 to 20 percent of the population.

Measurement of the size of the urban and rural population is hampered by the inadequacy of the data, but it is clear that more than 80 percent of the population live in rural areas and engage in subsistence agriculture. These rural dwellers consist of over 400,000 families, each with an average of six members. The population under the control of the Royal Lao Government in the first half of 1971 consisted of about 1.2 million people who were engaged primarily in subsistence agriculture and 500,000 people who lived in places where economic activity was largely monetized (see ch. 11, Character and Structure of the Economy).

According to official estimates of the age-sex structure of the population in 1970, males outnumbered females by about 36,000 (see table 1). More than two-fifths of the total population—41.7 percent—were under fifteen years of age, and about 4.5 percent

*Table 1. Laos, Estimated Population by Age and Sex, 1970*

(in thousands)

| Age Group | Male | Female | Total * |
|---|---|---|---|
| Under 5 | 250 | 245 | 495 |
| 5 - 9 | 201 | 197 | 398 |
| 10 - 14 | 174 | 169 | 343 |
| 15 - 19 | 151 | 148 | 299 |
| 20 - 24 | 134 | 129 | 263 |
| 25 - 29 | 117 | 112 | 230 |
| 30 - 34 | 102 | 97 | 198 |
| 35 - 39 | 82 | 83 | 165 |
| 40 - 44 | 74 | 70 | 145 |
| 45 - 49 | 61 | 59 | 119 |
| 50 - 54 | 50 | 49 | 98 |
| 55 - 59 | 38 | 38 | 76 |
| 60 - 64 | 27 | 28 | 56 |
| 65 and over | 38 | 39 | 77 |
| Total | 1,499 | 1,463 | 2,962 |

* Figures do not add because of rounding.

Source: Adapted from Royal Government of Laos, Ministere du Plan et de la Coopération, Service National de la Statistique, *Bulletin de Statistiques du Laos*, Vientiane, June 1970.

were over sixty in 1970. Life expectancy at birth, about thirty-five years, has been increasing as a result of improved health conditions, although a large part of the population in rural regions still receives little or no medical care (see ch. 5, Health, Education, and Welfare).

## POPULATION DYNAMICS

Laos has a population with limited immigration and very little emigration, both movements occurring at particular times for specific reasons rather than as consistent flows. Hostilities between the Lao People's Liberation Army and the forces of the Royal Lao Government have probably affected the death rate of young men. In 1971 the estimated vital rates per 1,000 population were a birth rate of forty-seven and a death rate of twenty-two.

Some seasonal migration takes place during the slack agricultural period (December to March) when farmers seek temporary employment in the cities. Many of the unskilled workers in the nonagricultural sector came from the Lao Theung ethnic groups; they are drawn particularly to the Luang Prabang area and urban centers in the panhandle section of Laos. Working on road gangs and other construction projects or sometimes as domestics, they remain in the urban areas from a few days to several months—long enough to earn money to buy salt and clothing. In addition, a number of farmers from northeastern Thailand provide an unskilled labor pool for the Vientiane area.

Because civil strife has produced a tight labor market in the cities, migrants from the countryside and, to a lesser extent, immigrants from Thailand make up 40 percent of the Vientiane work force and substantially the same proportion of the work force in other Laotian cities on the Mekong River. This labor influx has fostered urbanization, which in the early 1970s was proceeding at an estimated 10 percent a year in Vientiane and 7.5 percent a year in urban areas generally (see ch. 4, Social Systems). Seasonal movement to the larger population centers also occurs during the slack agricultural periods, when many farmers, particularly from the rice paddies of the Mekong lowlands, visit town or city to seek employment; they usually return to their villages when the next planting season begins (see ch. 12, Economic Resources).

As of mid-1971 the record of refugee movements in Laos generated by internal political and civil strife extended for seventeen years. The first major refugee movement occurred shortly after the signing of the Geneva agreements of 1954 (see ch. 3, Historical Setting; ch. 10, Foreign Relations). Hill tribesmen began moving southward from the northernmost provinces of Laos: Phong Saly, Houa Khong, northern Luang Prabang, and Houa Phan. The greater portion of these refugees moved into Xieng Khouang Province and to the central and southern areas of Luang Prabang Province.

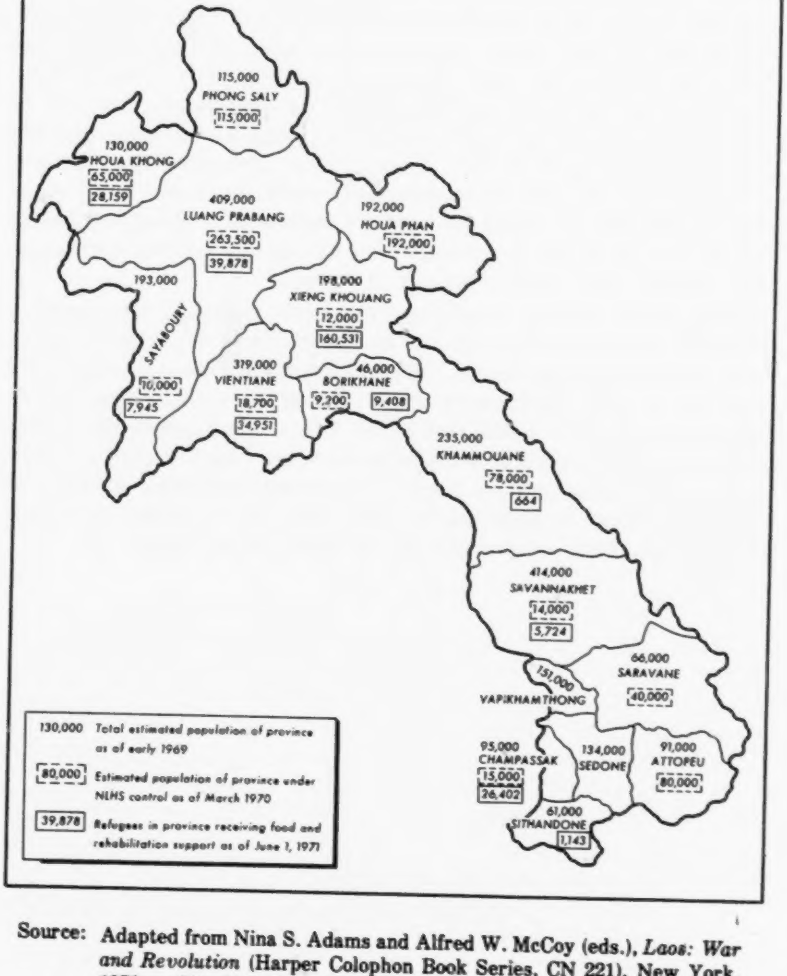
By 1962 there were approximately 125,000 refugees who had moved in a southwesterly direction out of the area of Samneua, in Houa Phan Province, and from the eastern portion of Xieng Khouang Province, territories that were controlled by the North Vietnamese and their Laotian auxiliaries. Depending upon the ebb and flow of military operations in northern Laos over the next six years, there were seasonal increases in the refugee population and a persistent displacement of population gradually westward. By the end of the rainy season in 1963 the total number of refugees was about 128,000, of whom the largest number were the Meo, who have been forced by the war into areas north of Vientiane where much of the land has been exhausted by slash-and-burn agriculture.

Beginning with the dry season in the autumn of 1968, the North Vietnamese significantly increased their military activities in Laos. The response by the forces of the Royal Lao Government converted the Plain of Jars into a battlefield for the first time since 1964. Approximately 200,000 civilians lived in the towns and villages in and around the Plain of Jars. Many of them were caught up in the fighting that swirled around them during the last nine months of 1969.

As the dry season began in the last months of 1969, the North Vietnamese resumed their attacks in other parts of the country. In early 1970 the forces of the Royal Lao Government were pushed back from the Plain of Jars, and approximately 17,000 refugees were moved out with them in February and March 1970. North Vietnamese attacks in Attopeu and Saravane provinces reached their climax from April through June 1970, and another 15,000 civilians were displaced in those areas.

By the time the dry season ended in the early summer of 1970, the North Vietnamese and their Lao People's Liberation Army auxiliaries controlled a broad band of territory stretching from the entire Plain of Jars in the north to the Bolovens Plateau in the south of Laos. During the course of this military campaign, a total of about 150,000 persons were displaced by the North Vietnamese offensive and moved westward as charges of the Royal Lao Government, supported by the United States government (see ch. 5, Health, Education, and Welfare).

In April 1971 there were approximately 309,000 residents of Laos who received refugee assistance of some kind. Of these 309,000 persons, 120,000 were the families of forces of the Royal Lao Government; 169,000 came from areas from which they were pushed westward by the North Vietnamese forces; and 20,000 came


115,000
PHONG SALY
115,000
130,000
HOUA KHONG
65,000
28,159
409,000
LUANG PRABANG
263,500
39,878
192,000
HOUA PHAN
192,000
193,000
SAYABOURY
10,000
7,945
198,000
XIENG KHOUANG
12,000
160,531
319,000
VIENTIANE
18,700
34,951
46,000
BORIKHANE
9,200
9,408
235,000
KHAMMOUANE
78,000
664
414,000
SAVANNAKHET
14,000
5,724
66,000
SARAVANE
40,000
151,000
VAPIKHAMTHONG
95,000
CHAMPASSAK
15,000
26,402
134,000
SEDONE
91,000
ATTOPEU
80,000
61,000
SITHANDONE
1,143
130,000 Total estimated population of province as of early 1969
80,000 Estimated population of province under NLHS control as of March 1970
39,878 Refugees in province receiving food and rehabilitation support as of June 1, 1971

Source: Adapted from Nina S. Adams and Alfred W. McCoy (eds.), *Laos: War and Revolution* (Harper Colophon Book Series, CN 221), New York, 1970, p. 231; U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Labor Law and Practice in the Kingdom of Laos* (BLS Report No. 290), Washington, 1965, p. 16; and U.S. Embassy in Vientiane, Agency for International Development, Mission to Laos, *Facts on Foreign Aid to Laos: Supplement No. 1—Refugees*, Vientiane, June 1, 1971.

*Figure 4. Laos, Estimated Population Under NLHS Control or in Refugee Status, by Province, from 1970 to Mid-1971*

from areas controlled by the Lao People's Liberation Army and North Vietnamese troops. By June 1971 the total receiving food and rehabilitation support had risen to more than 315,000 (see fig. 4).

The exact causes of the movements of refugees have varied. In some instances the cause has been clear and simple—the North Vietnamese, not trusting the civilian population, drove the refugees out ahead of their forces. This cause has been particularly evident in the case of the Meo population north and east of the Plain of Jars. In other instances the civilian population, having experienced or known the reputation of life under the North Vietnamese and the NLHS, have chosen to flee. In still other instances the constant pressure and menace of warfare have caused the people to move from their homes and accept refugee status. In a small number of cases, the Royal Lao Government has moved the civilian population to remove them from the path of battle.

The major source of foreign nationals entering the country through controlled entry points has been Thailand, with recorded arrivals of 8,345 persons in 1969 and 1,522 persons in the first six months of 1970. Departures of persons of Thai nationality in the same periods were 6,549 and 1,053. The second and third largest sources, both arrivals and departures, were Japan and the United States. The Mekong River generally is readily crossable for most of its length where it forms the boundary between Laos and Thailand. The extent of movement back and forth was not known.

# CHAPTER 3

# HISTORICAL SETTING

The Kingdom of Laos, the name by which the country was known in 1971, came into being in 1946 under French guidance. It became a constitutional monarchy the following year and achieved full independence from France in 1953.

The first ruler of the new kingdom traced his descent from the royal line of the ancient Lao kingdom of Lan Xang, founded in 1353. Lan Xang at the end of the seventeenth century had split up into several smaller states, each subject at various times to Burmese, Siamese, and Vietnamese suzerainty, sometimes to two at once. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—until the imposition of French domination in the late 1800s—the fortunes of these Lao states were to a major extent determined by the shifts in power relationships among the more powerful states surrounding them.

The Laotian government, newly independent in 1953, was immediately threatened by rightist and leftist factional dissidence; the leftist elements received external support first from the communist Viet Minh forces and later from the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam). By the early 1960s the country was on the brink of civil war, the international implications of which brought about the convening of a conference of Geneva in 1962. At the conference agreements were reached that have permitted Laos to survive as an independent and neutralist state.

## ORIGIN OF THE LAO

The Kingdom of Laos derived its name from the Lao, a branch of the Tai ethnic group. In their earlier history the Tai occupied most of present-day Szechwan and Yunnan provinces in southwest China, where they established the kingdom of Nan Chao in the eighth century A.D.; its capital was in Yunnan. A relatively well organized state with strong military forces, Nan Chao existed until 1253, when it was destroyed by the Mongols under Kublai Khan.

Chinese expansion, even before the destruction of Nan Chao, had brought pressure on these Tai peoples, who gradually migrated farther south. Some Tai, including the present-day Lao, followed the Mekong River into the rugged, sparsely populated northern hinterland of the Khmer empire, which was centered in the modern Khmer Republic (Cambodia). The few inhabitants of this region consisted of two distinct groups. One group was dark skinned, believed by some to have been in the area since the time land bridges linked the continent with the major archipelagoes near southeastern Asia. The second group was Malayo-Polynesian, who had migrated there sometime between 500 B.C. and A.D. 500. There were also some Cham, Mon, and Khmer peoples, who may have been of Malayo-Polynesian origin (see ch. 4, Social Systems).

The early Lao migration was peaceful—not an invasion—and did not involve large movements of population. The Lao accepted Khmer domination of their tribal organization and later appeared to have been under the suzerainty of a Tai state to the west in what is now Thailand. Gradually, as their numbers increased, they occupied the valleys of the Mekong and its tributaries for their wet-rice cultivation, displacing earlier inhabitants who then moved to higher altitudes. The breakup of Nan Chao accelerated the southward migration of the Tai, who reached the areas of modern Assam in India, Burma, Thailand, North Vietnam, and Hainan Island.

In their long association with the Chinese, the Tai peoples assimilated from the Chinese the arts of war, use of the bow, terracing of hill slopes for cultivation, and wet-rice cultivation on the plains. They did not, however, adopt writing from the Chinese but from the culturally Indianized Mon and Khmer. This indirect Indian influence on the Tai, including the Lao, was also evident in the mythology and rites that provided supernatural sanction for rulers. One of these myths concerns the origin of the Lao. It relates how the King of Heaven sent down to earth a semidivine ancestor, Khoun Borom, to rule the Celestial Kingdom (probably an allusion to China). Mounted in royal splendor on a white elephant and accompanied by two wives, he arrived in the vicinity of present-day Dien Bien Phu. There he found two enormous gourds, which when pierced with a poker produced men, women, seeds, animals, and all the materials useful in populating the world. The darker peoples were said to have emerged sooty from a hole burned with the poker. Khoun Borom divided the land among his seven sons, the divisions corresponding to the regions into which the Tai migrated. Khoun Lo, the eldest son, was given the lands of Muong Swa (present-day Luang Prabang Province), from which the Lao empire of Lan Xang developed.

## THE KINGDOM OF LAN XANG

The recorded history of the Lao started in the fourteenth century with Fa Ngoun, by legend the twenty-third successor of Khoun Lo. Fa Ngoun was brought up at the Khmer Court of Angkor and was married to a Khmer princess. With Khmer assistance he returned to Muong Swa and conquered the small states that constitute present-day Laos as well as much of the Khorat Plateau in northeastern Thailand. In 1353 he united these territories into the Lao kingdom of Lan Xang (literally, Million Elephants), one of the largest, though sparsely populated, states in the region.

Fa Ngoun was converted to Theravada Buddhism (see Glossary) and received from his father-in-law a mission of Cambodian Buddhist monks who brought, in addition to the Buddhist scriptures, a famous gold statue of the Buddha, known as the Prabang, which was believed to have come from Ceylon originally. The statue became the principal religious symbol of Lan Xang and remains so in modern Laos. Fa Ngoun established Buddhism as the state religion; however, it had only a superficial effect on the majority of the people, who continued their traditional worship of *phi* (see Glossary) (see ch. 6, Religion; ch. 4, Social Systems).

Fa Ngoun, called the Conqueror, continued to expand Lan Xang's territory. Its eastern borders eventually reached Champa and extended along the Annamite Chain; on the west it was bordered by three Tai kingdoms along the Menam River. Fa Ngoun may have received tribute from one of these kingdoms as well as a princess for marriage to his son. Constant warfare exhausted his people, however, and Fa Ngoun's excesses and the ruthlessness of his military commanders finally caused his ministers to drive him into exile in 1373.

His successor was known as Phya Sam Sene Thai (literally, Lord of 300,000 Tai) a title derived from a census of adult males taken in 1376. The census showed about 300,000 men in the kingdom to be of Tai origin; another 400,000 were of non-Tai origin. Sam Sene Thai's reign was one of consolidation and administrative development under strong Siamese influence. He was a devout Buddhist, building *wat* (see Glossary) and schools; under his rule the Buddhist priest began to assume in the Lao communities the place of honor that was traditional in other Buddhist countries. The *wat* developed into the center of community life and social gathering as well as a place of worship.

The king established a standing army said to have had 150,000 men consisting of infantry, cavalry, and an elephant corps, supported by a supply corps of 20,000. His capital was well placed economically, and under his rule Lan Xang became an important center of trade, its gumlac and benzoin being much in demand by the Siamese (see ch. 13, Trade and Transportation). Lan Xang grew larger than any of its neighbors and became embroiled in struggles with Siamese and Burmese states, a continuing feature of Laotian history.

Sam Sene Thai's administrative structure was based on the principle of absolute monarchy. It employed princes of royal blood as the king's main advisers. There was a hierarchy of officials, tax collectors, and minor functionaries holding their positions at the pleasure of the king; however, positions of the royal family were hereditary. Next to the king in power was the *maha oupahat* (second king or viceroy) who, although not necessarily of royal blood, was the king's most intimate adviser, often acting in his stead. Governors of *muong* (districts) might either be royal appointees or selected by a local council of notables from the family of the previous incumbent. In theory, any qualified person could rise to high office.

In 1520 King Phothisarath succeeded to the throne of Lan Xang and moved the capital to Vientiane (Vien Chang). He was notable for his devotion to Buddhism, the construction of Buddhist *wat*, and his attempt at suppression of the cult of *phi*. He strengthened the official position of the established religion, but the people were as much spirit worshipers as they were Buddhists.

Phothisarath warred with his neighbors and in 1545 obtained the throne of Lan Na (see Glossary) for his son Setthathirath. The son inherited the throne of Lan Xang in 1547. He returned to Muong Swa (to which the capital had again been moved), taking with him an important religious object and symbol of sovereignty known as the Emerald Buddha, to safeguard it from Burmese attack. Under pressure from the Burmese, however, he again moved Lan Xang's capital to Vientiane (at that time the old capital of Muong Swa was given its present-day name of Luang Prabang). At his new capital, King Setthathirath built the temple compound, Wat Keo, and a stupa (see Glossary), That Luang, in which the Emerald Buddha and other Buddhist relics were then enshrined.

Setthathirath mysteriously disappeared in 1571 on his way home from a punitive expedition against Cambodia, perhaps in battle with the unconquered tribes in the highlands. Lan Xang then entered a period of twenty years of anarchy and Burmese domination. A decline of Burmese power, however, permitted the restoration of Laotian independence in 1591. In 1637 Souligna Vongsa seized power after another dynastic struggle. His long rule, from 1637 to 1694, has been called the golden age of Laos. The country's boundaries were redefined, and Laos was probably at its zenith in territory and in power among its neighbors. Souligna Vongsa did, however, alienate the small but strategically important kingdom of Xieng Khouang.

## PERIOD OF LAO FRAGMENTATION

Souligna Vongsa contributed to the fall of Lan Xang by refusing to stay the execution of his only son. Upon the king's death in 1694 there was a struggle for succession that destroyed the unity of the kingdom.

Three Lao states emerged from competition for the throne. Souligna Vongsa's nephew controlled from Vientiane a considerable area on both sides of the middle Mekong, under the suzerainty of

Annam, which had helped him to get the throne. A separate kingdom was established at Luang Prabang in 1707 by Souligna Vongsa's grandsons; this area remained independent of the Vietnamese. A third kingdom, Champassak, which controlled the southernmost provinces on both sides of the Mekong, was established in 1713 by another prince. This kingdom was increasingly influenced by Siam.

The Kingdom of Vientiane declined steadily and in 1778 was occupied by Siam, which also exacted tribute from Luang Prabang. Double vassalage existed during this period. For example, the kingdom of Vientiane paid tribute—subsequently restored by Siam—not only to Siam but also to Vietnam after the revival of Vietnamese power by Emperor Gia Long in 1802. This was possible because tribute was little more than a symbolic act implying virtually no obligation from either party.

In the 1820s Prince Anou, a former *maha oupahat,* who then ruled Vientiane, involved his kingdom in a disastrous war with Siam. His capital was destroyed in 1829; its inhabitants were forcibly resettled in Siam, and much of the central Mekong area in Laos was depopulated. In 1873 a European traveler found Vientiane still in ruins. The Siamese during this time also carried off the sacred Prabang Buddha and other booty. Later Siamese campaigns resulted in a virtual depopulation of the area between the Mekong and the Annamite Chain; Xieng Khouang was the only surviving Lao state in this buffer zone.

In the latter 1800s the kingdom of Luang Prabang was reduced in size by the Siamese to no more than a small portion of the buffer zone between Siam and Vietnam. Xieng Khouang continued to exist during part of this period through a policy of neutrality under which it paid tribute to both sides, but in 1885 it was occupied by Siamese troops. In the same year another Siamese conquest of Vientiane occurred, and both Luang Prabang and the kingdom of Champassak were reduced to being Siamese satellites. Vietnam annexed Sam Neua, then an autonomous hill state in northeast Laos, in the same year.

## THE FRENCH COLONIAL PERIOD

In the course of the intense European colonial activity that occurred in Southeast Asia generally in the nineteenth century, the French were the first to make contact with Laos. After the establishment of French protectorates over Annam and Tonkin in 1882, the French started active intervention in the Lao territories. The Siamese troops that occupied Xieng Khouang and Sam Neua in 1885 had done so ostensibly to suppress Chinese bandits but in reality to counter French moves. The French recognized Siamese suzerainty there but secured the right to maintain a vice consul at Luang Prabang. The appointee, August Pavie, was credited with subsequently winning the area for France by persuading the royal court at Luang Prabang to request French protection.

Because of French pressure, the Siamese by successive treaties between 1893 and 1907 renounced all claims to territory east of the Mekong and to islands in the river as well as to territory along the lower west bank. The upper portions west of the Mekong—part of the former Lan Xang kingdom—remained a part of present-day Thailand.

In 1899 the French stationed a chief resident in Vientiane to unify the administration of the territories of Luang Prabang, Xieng Khouang, Champassak, and Vientiane into a single administrative entity, called Laos for the first time. Only the royal house of Luang Prabang retained its royal title and prerogatives under French protection. The son of the king of Champassak was appointed governor of Bassac Province but without royal status. The other principalities were reduced to provinces; no effort was made to restore their royal families, and the entire area was ruled directly or indirectly by French officials.

On the whole, the hand of France rested lightly on Laos. The French generally accepted the advice and employed the services of the local elite, especially the tribal chiefs. Patterns of local rule and custom compatible with French sovereignty were unmolested. The French were adamant only in abolishing slavery and in tightly controlling all fiscal administration. Gradually, however, they also began influencing the judicial and educational systems and later made an innovation by establishing government health and sanitation services.

The Lao caused the French little trouble. The crown prince, Sisavang Vong, who returned from studying in Paris in 1904 to assume the throne of Luang Prabang, accepted French overlordship. The use of French military force did not involve the Lao. French action was directed, between 1901 and 1907, at a group of southern Mountain Mon-Khmer who rebelled to protest suppression of their customary slave trading. Chinese bandits from Yunnan Province in China kept the colonial army occupied between 1914 and 1916. The final major action occurred from 1919 to 1921 and was against Meo raids on the Lao and other groups.

## WORLD WAR II AND TRANSITION

During World War II the Japanese, with concessions made by the Vichy regime in France, occupied French Indochina in 1941. A few Lao engaged in underground resistance against the Japanese, but most showed little resentment, and life went on much as usual.

Thailand seized and, after Japanese "mediation," kept portions of the Lao provinces of Bassac and Sayaboury lying west of the Mekong. In compensation for Lao acquiescence in this loss of territory the Vichy French made the kingdom of Luang Prabang a protectorate and extended it to include the provinces of Vientiane, Xieng Khouang, and Houa Khong. King Sisavang Vong was authorized to form a cabinet, adapted from the traditional king's council, in which his eldest son, Prince Phetsarath, was prime minister.

In March 1945 the Japanese declared the French colonial regime ended; the princely rulers were to become an independent part of Japan's "new order." King Sisavang Vong at first proclaimed through the crown prince his loyalty to France but was later forced by the Japanese to declare his independence. The viceroy and prime minister, Prince Phetsarath, who had a relatively free hand in running the country, in August 1945 confirmed that Japanese-instigated declaration of independence and decreed that Laos was to be an independent monarchy under King Sisavang Vong. The prince formed a committee called the Lao Issara (Free Lao) to resist any attempt to return to colonial status; however, Free French paratroopers landed in Vientiane and Luang Prabang and announced the resumption of the French protectorate.

The king, apparently under French pressure, stripped Prince Phetsarath of his titles and positions in October 1945. This action strengthened the Lao Issara, which in October 1945 formed the Committee of the People and proclaimed a provisional constitution of an independent Laos. The king refused to approve the constitution and the government, whereupon the new National Assembly deposed him on the grounds that he was not a free agent. Later the king realized the strength of the movement, accepted the constitution, and was reinstated as a constitutional monarch after agreeing to install a Lao Issara government. Prince Phetsarath continued to be the main force in the Lao Issara, though he did not become prime minister. Sisavang Vong was enthroned as king of all Laos in traditional ceremonies in April 1946.

The Free French meanwhile had moved to restore French authority in Laos. A force of Franco-Lao guerrillas and French detachments was mustered in the south and advanced up the Mekong. It smashed the resistance of Vietnamese troops sent by Ho Chi Minh and of the small Lao Issara forces, and two days after Sisavang Vong's enthronement French ground forces entered Vientiane. The Lao Issara forces broke up into guerrilla bands; many escaped into Thailand, where they were joined by the whole Lao Issara government. In Thailand Prince Phetsarath, calling himself the regent of Laos, set up a government-in-exile.

The French became more conciliatory after occupying Vientiane and Luang Prabang. A Franco-Laotian commission was formed that produced a modus vivendi, signed on August 27, 1946, which confirmed the autonomy of Laos and provided for the election of a constitutional assembly. Despite some guerrilla action in the countryside, the election was held in January 1947, and in September of that year a constitution was officially promulgated.

Meanwhile, dissension arose in the Lao Issara government-in-exile. Prince Phetsarath refused to have any contact with the French and continued to press for a completely independent Laos. Opposing him was a half brother, Prince Souvanna Phouma, who also wanted independence but was inclined to work with the French to get it. Another half brother, Prince Souphanouvong, who had commanded the Lao Issara forces, demanded active cooperation with Ho Chi Minh's Viet Minh forces.

In 1947 the Lao Issara's operations in Thailand were adversely affected by a change in the Thai government, and many of its adherents returned to Laos. In 1949 a new Franco-Laotian convention fulfilled many of the Lao Issara's demands, and the organization dissolved; most of the exiles returned to reenter the service of the Lao government. Prince Phetsarath, however, remained in Thailand until 1957.

Under the 1949 Franco-Laotian convention, France recognized Laos as an independent associate state, and Laos affirmed adherence to the French Union. The convention gave Laos greater authority in foreign affairs, including the right to apply for membership in the United Nations. Several Western countries, including the United States, extended recognition, as did Thailand. The French, after the Viet Minh launched their offensive in Vietnam in 1950, hastened progress toward full Laotian independence in order to devote more attention to Vietnam. Full sovereignty was given Laos by the Franco-Laotian Treaty of 1953 (see ch. 10, Foreign Relations).

## INDEPENDENCE AND CIVIL WAR

Independent Laos immediately encountered economic, military, and political difficulties. The French withdrew their troops to meet the threat in Vietnam, and Laos was compelled to form its own army. This was accomplished under French tutelage and with French financial and logistic support furnished from funds and stocks supplied to France by the United States.

An overriding complication was the constant threat of intervention by North Vietnam. Prince Souphanouvong, who had gone to Hanoi in 1948, later headed a communist movement that was formed in 1950. It was originally known as the Free Lao Front but later was renamed the Lao Patriotic Front (Neo Lao Hak Sat—NLHS, see Glossary). This organization, whose military arm was popularly known as the Pathet Lao (See Glossary), presented itself as the free government of all Laos and the refuge of all true opponents of French colonialism and United States "imperialism."

In 1953 Viet Minh troops, with support from Pathet Lao units, crossed into northern Laos, forced French and Royal Lao Government units from the area, and established what Prince Souphanouvong called a resistance government in the province of Houa Phan (the government designation for the province of which Samneua is the capital). From this base the Viet Minh were within striking distance of Luang Prabang.

The Geneva Conference of 1954, convened primarily to end the fighting in Vietnam between the French Union forces and the Viet Minh, also reached a settlement for Laos. It decided that the dissident forces in Laos, both Viet Minh and Pathet Lao, be regrouped in the two northern Laotian provinces of Phong Saly and Houa Phan "pending a political settlement" that would integrate the NLHS into the national community. The conference also established the International Commission for Supervision and Control (commonly known as ICC) in Laos, composed of representatives of India, Canada, and Poland. Because of its makeup, the ICC was incapable of reaching the unanimous agreement required for effective action.

From 1955 to 1957 a series of negotiations to find an acceptable domestic political settlement took place among the various Laotian factions. Prolonged efforts primarily directed at political and military integration failed, the chief issue being the government's right to assume the administration of Phong Saly and Houa Phan provinces. Eventually, at the end of 1956, agreement in principle was reached as a basis for national reconciliation, for which the first step was to be a coalition government under Prince Souvanna Phouma. The initial attempt failed. Another effort resulted in November 1957 in the detailed settlements called the Vientiane Agreements for civil and military reintegration of the Pathet Lao into a united government.

The Government of National Union under Prince Souvanna Phouma was formed after Prince Souphanouvong surrendered the two northern provinces and swore allegiance to the Kingdom of Laos for himself and the NLHS. Supplementary elections to fill seats in the National Assembly for the two provinces, under terms of the Geneva Conference of 1954 were held in May 1958 and resulted in a victory for the NLHS and its ally, the Peace Party; together they won thirteen of the twenty-one seats contested. The reaction of the United States government to this electoral result was unfavorable and was a factor in the suspension, in June 1958, of the United States aid program in Laos, which had begun in 1953 and by 1958 amounted to all but a fraction of the Laotian budget.

The Government of the National Union fell, and its successor, under Phoui Sananikone as prime minister, excluded the Pathet Lao. Prince Souvanna Phouma was made ambassador to France. Also in 1958 the ICC adjourned. There were difficulties in integrating the Pathet Lao military forces, a move that was not completely accomplished, and Prince Souphanouvong was put under house arrest and later jailed. The Committee for the Defense of National Interests (CDNI—see Glossary), a group of educated persons and military officials considered strongly rightist, was dominant in the government. Within the CDNI, Colonel (later General) Phoumi Nosavan was dominant.

After almost a year in jail, Prince Souphanouvong and his NLHS colleagues escaped and rejoined the Pathet Lao in the north. The NLHS resumed its rebellion in 1959. It subsided somewhat after a special United Nations Security Council Investigation Subcommittee reported it could find no evidence that the Pathet Lao were using regular North Vietnamese troops. United Nations Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold then advised the government to adopt a more neutral policy, and an uneasy peace followed that lasted until mid-1960.

The next important development occurred in August 1960 when a young paratroop commander named Kong Le, dismayed by the constant war, seized Vientiane in a coup and proposed establishment of a neutral government. Prince Souvanna Phouma was recalled from Paris to form the new government proposed by King Savang Vatthana. General Phoumi Nosavan at first agreed to serve in this government but soon changed his mind and established a military headquarters in southern Laos from which he hoped to retake the capital. This he did in December, at which time Prince Souvanna Phouma's government and the forces under Kong Le retreated to the northeast, where Kong Le's troops seized the Plain of Jars in January 1961.

The neutralist forces were joined by the Pathet Lao and were aided additionally by North Vietnamese units and by supplies furnished by the Soviet Union. A combined attack was launched, and by the spring of 1961 the combined forces appeared to be in a position to take over the entire country.

The United States warned that it would intervene to prevent a communist takeover. The situation became an international issue and, to abate the crisis, a fourteen-nation conference was convened at Geneva in May 1961 that intended through both international and internal Lao negotiations, to give a neutral status to Laos.

After long and difficult negotiations, new Geneva agreements were signed in July 1962 providing certain international guarantees for the independence and neutrality of Laos. These guarantees were to be supervised by the revived ICC.

Internally, the three Lao factions—the rightist, represented by Prince Boun Oum; the neutralist, represented by Prince Souvanna Phouma and backed by Kong Le's forces; and the communist NLHS under Prince Souphanouvong—reached agreement and formed the Government of National Union under the premiership of Prince Souvanna Phouma in June 1962. General Phoumi Nosavan and Prince Souphanouvong were appointed deputy premiers, and it was agreed that government decisions generally would be unanimous and that the unanimity of the three leaders would be required in matters concerned with foreign relations and national defense and security.

After this settlement disagreements arose between the Pathet Lao forces and those of Kong Le. Minor skirmishing broke out, which turned into serious hostilities in early 1963 when the Pathet Lao opened an attack on Kong Le's troops. The troops had to withdraw from many of their positions on the Plain of Jars. The neutralist forces thereafter realigned themselves with the right-wing forces against the Pathet Lao.

Fighting between the neutralists and the Pathet Lao continued sporadically throughout 1963 and into 1964 despite efforts by Great Britain and the Soviet Union—who were cochairmen of the Geneva Conference of 1962—to arrange a cease-fire. A meeting of Prince Souvanna Phouma, Prince Souphanouvong, and General Phoumi Nosavan to work out an agreement finally took place in April 1964 but without success. A right-wing coup then overthrew the government, but the government was almost immediately reinstated, after consultation with King Savang Vatthana, by coup and government leaders; however, Prince Souvanna Phouma continued as prime minister.

The reinstated prime minister announced soon afterward, in May 1964, that agreement had been reached between the neutralist and the right-wing groups; the rightists accepted his leadership. When he appealed for cooperation from the Pathet Lao, however, Prince Souphanouvong refused to accept the government, maintaining that in effect it had been established by the right-wing coup leaders. The Pathet Lao then started heavy atttacks on the neutralists on the Plain of Jars. Kong Le's forces were driven from the area.

The loss of the Plain of Jars resulted in international consultations, though without full-scale conferences because of disagreements among the powers. At the request of the prime minister and in view of Pathet Lao refusal to allow ICC inspection of its territory, the United States began reconnaissance flights over Pathet Lao-held areas; this action was reported to Great Britain. In June 1964 the reconnaissance flights were accompanied by armed escorts authorized to fire back if fired upon.

Leaders of the three Laotian factions met in Paris in September 1964 in a further effort to resolve their differences. These meetings were once again unsuccessful. Lower level talks at Vientiane were continued, however; they went on sporadically until 1966 but without results.

Another coup by right-wing forces was attempted in Vientiane in January 1965 but was defeated by the government. General Phoumi Nosavan, one of the alleged leaders, fled to Thailand. One result was the reorganization of the Lao police force, previously a paramilitary force under right-wing control, into a civilian force.

National Assembly elections were held in July 1965. The NLHS refused to participate or to allow the election to be held in their territory. Souvanna Phouma, continuing as prime minister, made efforts to maintain the tripartite structure, which he considered his obligation because of the Geneva agreements, by retaining Prince Souphanouvong as one deputy premier and a representative of the right-wing group as the other. Cabinet posts were allocated among the three factions also: eleven to the neutralists, four to the NLHS, and four to the rightists.

In September 1966 the National Assembly rejected the government's budget. King Savang Vatthana dissolved the assembly, and in January 1967 new elections were held in which about 80 percent of the electorate voted. The NLHS again refused to participate, and polling for provinces occupied by the Lao People's Liberation Army (until 1965 known as the Pathet Lao) was confined to refugees from those areas. The new assembly met on January 30, 1967; the majority of its fifty-nine members though without sharply defined party alignment, supported Prince Souvanna Phouma.

# CHAPTER 4
# SOCIAL SYSTEMS

The Kingdom of Laos in 1971 still lacked national social cohesion as it had since the time of the first Laotian kingdom in the fourteenth century; it was marked by great ethnic diversity and minimal links connecting the different peoples to one another and to the nation as a whole (see figs. 5A and 5B). The largest unit toward which most Laotians feel loyalty or identity is the village, of which there were estimated to be approximately 9,400 in 1971—3,500 of them in areas outside the control of the Royal Lao Government.

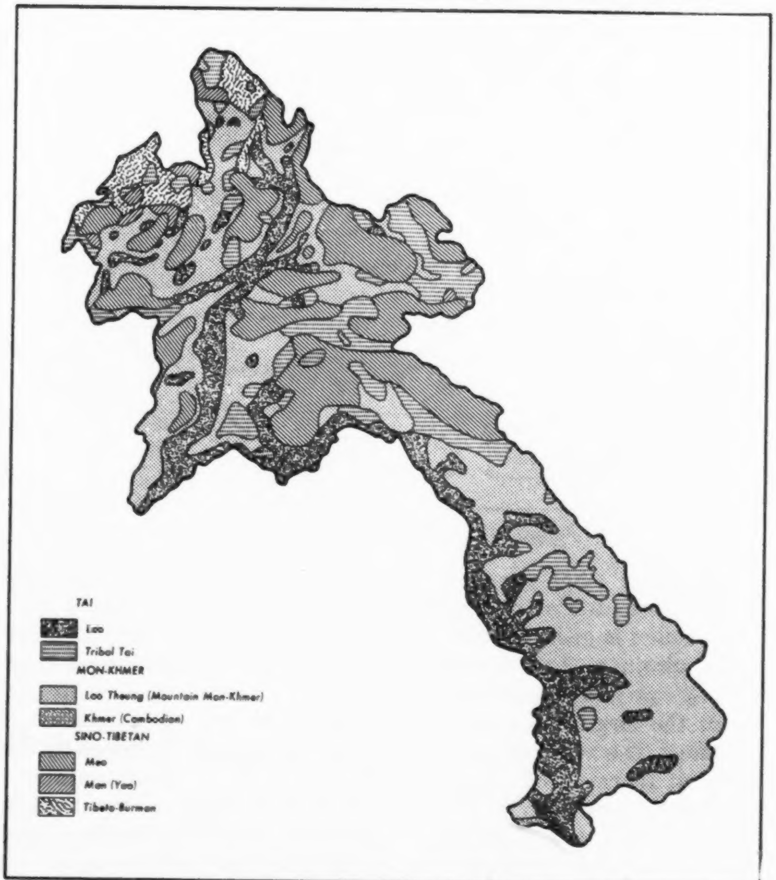

TAI
Lao
Tribal Tai
MON-KHMER
Lao Theung (Mountain Mon-Khmer)
Khmer (Cambodian)
SINO-TIBETAN
Meo
Man (Yao)
Tibeto-Burman

*Figure 5A. Ethnolinguistic Groups of Laos*

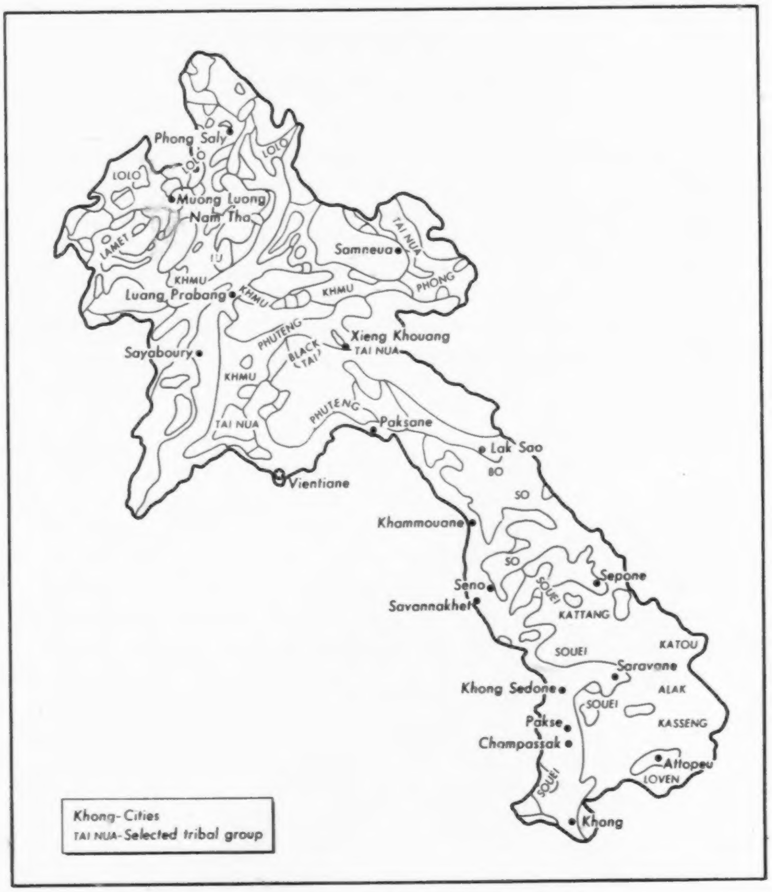

Phong Saly
LOLO
LOLO
LOLO
Muong Luong
Nam Tha
LAMET
LU
KHMU
Luang Prabang
KHMU
KHMU
Samneua
TAI NUA
PHONG
PHUTENG
BLACK TAI
Xieng Khouang
TAI NUA
Sayaboury
KHMU
PHUTENG
Paksane
TAI NUA
Vientiane
Lak Sao
BO
SO
Khammouane
SO
SOUEI
Sepone
Seno
Savannakhet
KATTANG
SOUEI
KATOU
Saravane
ALAK
Khong Sedone
SOUEI
Pakse
KASSENG
Champassak
Attopeu
LOVEN
SOUEI
Khong
Khong-Cities
TAI NUA-Selected tribal group

*Figure 5B. Selected Tribal Groups of Laos*

All of the more populous ethnic groups of Laos, based on the rough estimates of population breakdown available in mid-1971, were found in greater numbers beyond the borders of the kingdom than within it. This contributed to preexisting centrifugal tendencies based on historical rivalries and enmities that made difficult the forging of a unified national state (see ch. 3, Historical Setting). The achievement of this goal was further hindered by the difficult terrain, the relative absence of modern communications facilities, a low level of urbanization, a short national history, low literacy rates, and a plethora of mutually unintelligible languages and social arrangements (see ch. 2, Physical Environment and Population; ch. 7, Language, Communication, and the Arts).

Tending further to prevent a feeling of unity was the fact that for over two decades the country has been split into two major warring factions. The insurgent Lao Patriotic Front (Neo Lao Hak Sat—NLHS) was in control of approximately two-thirds of the land and one-third of the people as of mid-1971; the Royal Lao Government was in control of the remainder.

The tendency of Laotian society to come apart has been exacerbated by the armed intrusion of its North Vietnamese neighbor. This in large part has been occasioned by the war between the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam) and the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam) and the use of Laotian territory by North Vietnam as a sanctuary through which to transport men and supplies. In counteraction, there has been substantial United States involvement, resulting from that country's effort to keep North Vietnamese forces from using Laos for their military advantage.

This impingement of the Vietnamese conflict upon Laos has had a tremendous effect upon Laotian society in all ways. For example, the number of individual Laotian refugees who have reportedly received help from the royal government and the United States in the decade since 1961 amounted to more than 10 percent of the total population of the country. Many persons were known to have been displaced more than once, and reports from refugees on other persons who remained in NLHS areas indicated the probability of substantial displacements in that zone also.

## ETHNIC CONFIGURATION

Official Laotian terminology for the ethnic groups of Laos includes four categories: Lao Lum, Lao Tai, Lao Theung, and Lao Sung. The Lao Lum (valley Lao—ethnic Lao, commonly referred to simply as the Lao) are the largest single ethnic group in the country, variously estimated at between one-third and one-half of the population. They are settled along the Mekong River and its principal tributaries. The Lao are a subgroup of the Tai people who originated in southern China and have, over the past millennium, come to populate much of southern Asia from Assam in northeastern India to Hainan Island.

The Lao are more numerous outside the present borders of Laos than within it. It was estimated that, in 1970, there were eight times as many Lao living on the Thailand side of the Mekong as lived in all of Laos. Being the largest ethnic group in Laos and having the most highly organized social and political systems and the highest level of education of any of the Laotian peoples, the Lao control the government and dominate that portion of trade and commerce not in foreign hands. Also, their religion and culture are the most influential and prevalent in the country.

Laos also contains other Tai peoples, known as the Lao Tai, or tribal Tai. The tribal Tai live in river valleys of the upland areas where they, like the Lao of the plains, primarily grow irrigated rice. The tribal Tai also grow dry rice and other crops by the slash-and-burn method on the mountain slopes. The tribal Tai are for the most part non-Buddhist; they generally have avoided the towns and have resisted the patterns that attracted some Lao, but certain numbers of refugees have gone to urban areas. Although the tribal Tai are more similar to the Lao than are any other minority people in the country, they exhibit a difference in language and culture that is sufficient to make them distinct from the Lao. Within the tribal Tai themselves, there are also important ethnic and linguistic distinctions that divide the people into different subgroups, for example, the Lu, Tai Nua, Tai Yuan, Black Tai (Tai Dam), and Red Tai (Tai Daeng). Like the Lao, the tribal Tai have some formal political ties that connect them with institutions beyond the village.

The term *Lao Theung* (mountainside Laotian) embraces a number of different tribal peoples who were formerly referred to in Lao by the pejorative term, *kha,* meaning "slave." The Lao Theung live at higher altitudes than do the tribal Tai. It is commonly believed that they originally dwelt in the lowlands and gradually moved to the mountain slopes as Tao and tribal Tai took over the valleys. The Khmu are the largest ethnic group classified as Lao Theung, but the category also includes Tin, Lamet, Loven, and others. As far as is known, Lao Theung people all speak languages of the Mon-Khmer language family, live on the slopes of mountains, practice slash-and-burn agriculture (although some also carry on irrigated farming), and have few or no political or social institutions that extend beyond the village.

During the French colonial period the Lao Theung tended to be ruled indirectly through a chain of command that incorporated an ethnically based hierarchy. Thus, it was not uncommon for a Lamet village chief to report to a Lu tax collector, who in turn was responsible to a Lao canton chief, who was subordinate to a Vietnamese official, who was under the direction of one of the handful of Frenchmen charged with administering the province.

The term *Lao Sung* (mountaintop Laotian) is used primarily to denote the Laotian members of the Miao-Yao language family—that is, the Meo and the Man (Yao). The Lao Sung live at high altitudes—over 3,500 feet—where they practice slash-and-burn cultivation of rice and corn and grow opiom for cash. The Lao Sung are the most recent of the hill peoples to come to Laos, and they retain many influences of their Chinese homeland in Yunnan Province. The Meo, the major Lao Sung group, have a more highly developed social organization, extending beyond the village, than do any other Laotian hill peoples except the tribal Tai. Before many of them were displaced by the war in Laos, the Meo because of their cash earnings from the sale of opium were also wealthier than other hill peoples. The Meo also have the reputation for being better fighters and more aggressive generally than any other indigenous group.

On the mountainside, between the Lao Theung and Lao Sung, live small groups of Tibeto-Burman speakers, among them the Akha, Lolo, Lisa, and Lahu peoples. There were probably fewer than 10,000 Tibeto-Burman speakers in all of Laos as of 1971, and it was not clear whether the Royal Lao Government considered them Lao Theung or Lao Sung. Their language, culture, and physical characteristics are unlike either. Lao informally refer to these Tibeto-Burman speakers as mountain people and call them the Kha-Ko.

Different ethnic groups tend to be found in certain areas. The Lao live in river valleys and on plains, inhabiting both sides of the Mekong—in Laos and in Thailand. The settlement pattern is related to topography, with certain ethnic groups typically favoring certain altitudes.

The altitudinal stratification of ethnic settlement is so marked that, if one were to go from a valley at sea level to a mountaintop, one could expect to encounter first the Lao; then, in the upland valleys, some villages of tribal Tai, then a Khmu village; then, higher up, perhaps a village of Tibeto-Burman speakers such as Akha; and, finally, a Meo or Man village on the mountaintop. Moreover, a Meo of one mountaintop has generally more in common in language and culture with a Meo from another mountaintop (not only in Laos but also in Burma, Thailand, North Vietnam, and mainland China) than with a Khmu villager who lives halfway down his own mountain or with the Lao canton chief living in the valley below. Similarly, the other tribal peoples feel closer bonds to fellow tribesmen wherever located than to their neighbors. For all Laotians, however, the chief social tie beyond the family unit is to the village or residence.

The urban areas, where close to 18 percent of the population lived at the start of the 1970s, have long been under the economic and cultural dominance of nonindigenous persons: Chinese, Vietnamese, Thai, French, and others. Beginning in the late 1950s there also appeared in major urban centers of Laos a small community of persons from the United States who, because of the size and scope of the United States military, economic, and social welfare activities in the country, were extremely influential in royal government circles.

## LAO

The Lao social system provides such integration as the kingdom possesses. Lao society, language, and culture are distributed throughout the lowland regions and are linked directly or indirectly with the non-Lao communities. The language of the Lao is the official language; their religion, Buddhism, is the state religion; and members of their traditional elite serve as national leaders both for the Royal Lao Government and for the NLHS. All of the country's people are, in principle, members of territorially defined administrative units administered beyond the village and district levels almost exclusively by ethnic Lao.

### The National Elite

Among the Lao a clear distinction in the precolonial period was drawn between royalty and nobility on the one hand and commoners on the other. Some commoners could, however, rise to high office. The highest officeholders were members of a title-holding group commonly known as the mandarinate. This traditional elite survives as the core of the modern national elite of Laos. The Lao elite, old and new, has always been small and remained so in 1971. It was estimated in the mid-1960s to consist basically of members of about twenty ruling clans, comprising a few thousand persons at most.

There has never been, however, in the past or present, any institutionalized, insuperable barriers to upward mobility and, strictly speaking, the mandarinate was not a hereditary group; a son, although awarded an honorific of address, did not automatically inherit his father's office, title, or status. The mandarinate was open to entry from below, since any person demonstrating the requisite qualifications could be appointed to it, and positions were also awarded to those who had earned the gratitude of royalty. In practice, nevertheless, the mandarinate tended to be self-replenishing.

The mandarinate provided the bulk of the senior government service in the palace and at the central governmental level and also in the regional administration. As with royalty, officials of the mandarinate were remunerated according to rank by a system involving the right to a portion of taxes collected from a given amount of irrigated ricefields to which the official held title but which were tilled by commoners. Except for the obligation to give labor and pay taxes to the noble, royal, or official overlord, the Lao farmer treated the land as if it were his own.

The system was eliminated by the French. Gradually, under French rule, control over much of the land passed directly into the hands of commoners in the form of small holdings. Variations in landholdings have continued to exist, however. The king and the local nobility of the area around Luang Prabang, for example, own large areas of irrigated land. At the other end of the scale there were also in the late 1960s some Lao villagers who had to work as tenants, lacking sufficient riceland of their own.

Another major change that took place during the French period was the removal of real responsibility from indigenous Lao control and its placement in the hands of a few Frenchmen and, in the lower and middle grades, primarily in the hands of French-speaking, French-trained Vietnamese. Some of the ancient royal houses of Laos lost their official status. The kings of Xieng Khouang and Champassak were reduced to the status of governors, and only the royal house of Luang Prabang retained its formal status as a kingdom.

The Luang Prabang kingdom was administered indirectly by the French, whereas the rest of Laos was administered directly by the French colonial government. The actual differences between direct and indirect administration in implementation were few. Using a skeleton staff of Frenchmen (only some seventy in 1904), the colonial regime tended to adapt Lao traditional institutions to its purposes, even in directly administered areas, and to manipulate tribal-ethnic hierarchies in the case of the non-Lao of the hills.

French-educated Lao in time came to fill the lowest level positions in provincial bureaucracies (as translators and clerks), but few rose to the middle level positions, which were dominated by ethnic Vietnamese. Except for such formal nominal rulers as the king of Luang Prabang and a few royal heirs granted provincial governorships, the top officials were all French.

Although they were displaced from positions of political and administrative responsibility during the French period, members of the old elite—royalty, nobility, and families long associated with the mandarinate—were the only indigenous Laotians wealthy enough to be able to make the transition necessary to become members of the modern political and social elite. The chief criteria for modern elite status were fluency in spoken and written French and a secular, Western-style education. To receive a Western-style education at the university level or beyond, it was (and remained in 1971) necessary to go abroad (see ch. 5, Health, Education, and Welfare). This limited the modern indigenous elite primarily to descendants of the traditional elite or to those who had allied themselves with that group. As in the past, however, upward mobility was not totally blocked. The armed forces, in particular, have offered an avenue for social mobility. Through it and through political associations, it has been possible for Lao of modest backgrounds, and even for some non-Lao, to achieve high social status and important positions in government.

Laos has lacked an indigenous middle class of any importance. Staff for middle and lower level administrative positions and for trade and commerce and the small core of modern artisan and technical personnel consisted almost exclusively before World War II of nonindigenous persons—Chinese, Vietnamese, and others. These people tended to reside in towns and cities. Although the numbers of indigenous Laotians in the middle-class category remained small in the early 1970s, they have been augumented within the past decade by an increase in numbers in such categories as schoolteachers and lower level officials and other white-collar workers. Most, but not all, of these new members of the indigenous middle class were ethnic Lao. (Professional persons, such as lawyers and doctors, have tended to come from upper class families, since their education was prohibitively expensive for ordinary people. Professional qualifications thus tend to be associated with the upper, rather than middle, class in Laotian society.)

Traditionally, the distinctions between various grades of princes and mandarins were marked by titles, and different vocabularies were used in speaking to them. Deferential bowing, prostration, and even crawling were, at one time, proper procedures before persons of some high ranks. Although this kind of formal acknowledgement of rank has diminished in incidence and importance, some customs of this type persist.

## Village Social Arrangements

In the political hierarchy the village is the smallest administrative unit. Its headman (*pho ban* ), chosen from among the most respected heads of households, is generally elected for life or until he chooses to retire. He is usually one of the well-to-do men, respected by the other householders for his community and religious activities, the generosity of his hospitality when giving feasts, the quality of his house, and the contributions he makes to the *wat* (see Glossary) and *sangha* (see Glossary).

The uses of wealth rather than its accumulation determine the choice of a village headman, for the way in which a man distributes his wealth reveals his character. A headman is, next to the head of the *wat*, the most important person in the village, and he must be able to maintain the dignity of his position—for which he is not paid. Thus, a poor man, though he might be highly respected for his industry, piety, generosity, and knowledge, would not be chosen as headman because he could not meet the obligations the villagers feel to be necessary. In some villages the title tends to be hereditary, or nearly so; a retiring headman usually designates his son or some other close relative to succeed him, after which the villagers formally elect his choice.

The headman's authority is limited both by statute and by custom. It is directed mainly toward organizing and supervising work groups, settling disputes between households, welcoming strangers, announcing government directives, and referring matters that are out of his jurisdiction to the proper authorities (see ch. 8, Political System and Values).

The Lao headman is first among equals. Important decisions must be made in consultation with other household heads. The village headman must suggest and persuade rather than order.

The authority and activities of the village headman and the head of the village *wat* do not overlap; members of the *sangha* are forbidden to enter into secular matters. Even the initiation and management of money and labor contributions for the construction and maintenance of the *wat* are in the hands of a layman, either the village headman or another respected villager specially chosen for the task.

Monks, however, are involved in various ways in the ceremonial and ritual life of the village (see ch. 6, Religion). Most village-wide activities are connected to Buddhist institutions, and the *wat* is the center of Lao village life.

Although the Lao village is largely self-contained and self-sufficient, it is by no means a discrete and isolated entity. The two most obvious outside frames into which a village fits are the religious and the political structures. Despite the village's links with the formal structures, however, the ordinary Lao in the rural areas rarely sees or has direct relations with national figures. In the area around Vientiane or Luang Prabang, members of the national elite may visit villages occasionally, but most villagers see only provincial or district officials or their local deputy in the National Assembly, and even these visit only occasionally.

Another link between villages is trade. Every villager depends upon manufactured goods that cannot be produced at home, and he must produce surpluses to buy them. A 1967 sociocultural survey of five districts in the Vientiane Plain area indicated that the amount of trade was very slight, however. The average farmer in the survey group was largely self-sufficient economically. His household, consisting on the average of between six and seven members, lived chiefly off the crops grown on the farm that they worked in common. The average farmer in this area owned his farm, which consisted of under eleven acres, and cultivated approximately two-thirds of it, nearly 95 percent in rice and the remainder in dry field crops. Virtually no rice was sold for cash, since the family consumed almost everything it raised. Also, the farmers considered that the distance from all-weather roads—from over 0.5 mile to three miles—was too far to transport significant quantities of produce to market. The family pooled its labor, but about one-fifth of the families surveyed had some member working elsewhere or, for some other reason, absent from the farm; another one-fifth employed hired labor for peak periods in the agricultural cycle.

A conclusion reached by the surveyors was that, to a considerable degree, Lao rural life had changed little from its traditional, age-old pattern, even in an area a short distance from the kingdom's administrative capital and largest city.

The Lao basic social unit is the household, consisting of one or more nuclear families—each comprising husband, wife, and unmarried children—living under the same roof. Many households, at least among Lao commoners, are made up of one nuclear family, but in households where there are married daughters the young couple may live with the wife's family for a time before establishing their own household. When the last daughter marries, a two-family household of this type often becomes a permanent arrangement; the daughter then inherits the parental house, continuing to share it with her parents during their lifetime.

Although most of the food grown by the family meets basic needs, some is contributed to the clergy, and some is used to celebrate the significant transitional stages of household members. The social position and status of the household are largely dependent upon the magnitude of these gifts and celebrations and the general standard of living its members enjoy.

Within the household, labor is divided along the lines of sex and age. Men do most of the heavy work in the preparation of the fields but, at planting, transplanting, and harvesting time, women and children also help. Men also fish, build canoes, make and repair fishing gear and tools, hunt, and go to the hills to gather forest products or to trade.

Women are responsible for the domestic tasks. These include carrying water and wood, pounding rice, cooking, tending kitchen gardens and livestock, spinning, weaving, and making clothes. Women may also occasionally go to market to sell or exchange household surpluses. Old people and children are assets rather than liabilities in this kind of economy. The children learn early to help in the garden, haul water, and do small jobs around the house. If the old people are not able to assist in regular adult activities, they can always look after the children and thus release the mothers for necessary tasks.

To the outside world the household is represented by its single male head. It is he who sits in village meetings, and it is in his name that the census is taken and taxes are collected. He also makes all loans, decides to sell most of the surpluses, works out labor exchanges with other households, rents land, and lends buffalo. Other males within the household, even those with families of their own, are clearly subordinate to him, if not also dependent on him. The Lao household thus gives the outward appearance of a strongly patriarchal and authoritarian organization, but that is because statuses and roles are very clearly defined and differentiated; in fact, all observers agree that, within the structure of these statuses, there is a strongly egalitarian atmosphere between the sexes and that individuality is not stifled.

As long as there is a house site and a dwelling, the household continues. It can even endure without owning ricelands, for these can be rented or farmed in tenancy. The house site is always in a village, and it is usually separated or separable from its associated agricultural plots. These plots can be divided and redivided through sale and inheritance. More land can be added by purchase or rent, but the household group that subsists on this land is flexible and can, therefore, adjust its size and composition to the varying amounts of productive land. With the exception of the house, property of all kind appears to be divided equally among all the children.

The Lao reckon descent equally through men and women, although surnames are, by a 1943 law, passed from father to children. Until then, the Lao had not used family surnames and still do not ordinarily use them in direct address. A Lao distinguishes relatives on both sides of the family mainly by their age, sex, and genealogical distance from himself. As the distance of relationship increases, the prerogatives and sentiments of kinship decrease. For example, an uncle, cousin, and nephew are considered similar to father, brother, and son, but the relationship with them is less intense.

Behavior between persons of different age, sex, and generation is quite formal. Toward the Lao father the child behaves in an obedient and respectful manner, and this type of behavior is obligatory toward all other men of his generation. The same requirements, although less stringent, apply to the mother and other women of her generation. Reserve characterizes relationships of this kind. Respect is given also to an elder brother.

Between brothers and sisters age is not as important as the fact of their differing sexes. The relationship, though informal and easy, must not be overly friendly in public; neither must there be any physical contact, since touching implies sexual interest. The rules governing behavior between brothers and sisters also apply to all personal encounters in public between men and women. Husbands and wives do not publicly display affection for each other.

Even in private, a woman never touches a grown man's head, lies on a bed higher than her husband's, or walks in front of a man without asking permission. In the case of members of the *sangha,* women must avoid touching either the man or his garments and approaching him too closely.

Young people are allowed considerable sexual freedom—as long as they are discreet about it. Should a girl become pregnant, however, a wedding will usually follow as soon as possible. Considerable freedom of choice is permitted in choosing a spouse, and opportunities to meet eligible partners are provided. For example, at every large village celebration or feast, it is customary for young people to set up a "love court." Sitting in sex-segregated rows facing each other, the young people engage in witty exchanges and sing love songs to the accompaniment of the *khene*, a wind instrument (see ch. 7, Language, Communication, and the Arts.) Although there is no open courtship on such occasions, couples from the group are free to wander off casually into the dark. Such customs tend to channel and confine marriages within the village although they do not exclude outside marriages. It has been estimated that marriages within the village run as high as 80 percent of the total.

A man may take a second wife, but polygynous marriages are, by circumstance, usually restricted to the few wealthy and important men. A second wife is always subordinate to the first wife in status, but no distinction seems to be made between the children of the wives. Among royalty and the very wealthy, polygyny was at one time almost universal, and numerous wives were a mark of social distinction.

Ordinarily, a man joins his wife in her parents' household for a time. The length of the stay of the newly married couple varies, but it ideally lasts about two years, long enough for the wife to have borne her first child and seen him through the first difficult year. During this period the husband is under his father-in-law's authority and has little independent status in the village. Most men, therefore, prefer to establish their own households. As the peer of other heads of households, a man is then part of the village council and has a voice in the affairs of his village. By directing his own affairs he is in a better position to build up the necessary surpluses of wealth and thus raise his social status.

Divorces are easy to obtain, but they seem to be infrequent. The stability of the union is reinforced by pressures from the two parental households, which are concerned, among other things, about the marriage payment made by the bridegroom to the bride's family.

## TRIBAL TAI

The Lao Tai, or tribal Tai—related closely by language and less closely by culture to the Lao—were estimated in the latter 1960s at

13 percent of the population. The most important single distinction between the Lao and the tribal Tai is the fact that the tribal Tai have not received, either directly or indirectly, much influence from Indian culture. With the exception of the Lu and some others—all relatively recent converts—the tribal Tai are not Buddhists.

There are more than a dozen tribal Tai ethnic groups living in northern and central Laos, where they inhabit the plateaus and upland valleys adjacent to the northwestern parts of North Vietnam, southwestern mainland China, and northern Thailand. The major groups are the Black Tai, Red Tai, Tai Nua, Lu, and Phutai. They are primarily wet rice cultivators but also grow other crops and raise livestock, and some specialize in particular crafts, such as weaving and embroidery. They also do some silversmithing.

Among the tribal Tai, the nobility and, in the case of the Black Tai, the priesthood are members of certain patrilineal descent groups. Inheritance is through the male line, and males have the dominant familial role. In the case of the Black Tai, however, kinship terminology appears bilateral; women keep their maiden names after marriage, and a daughter, after marriage, keeps an ancestral altar of her own to honor dead parents. She also maintains considerable contact with her blood relatives after marriage.

Traditionally, the tribal Tai (including the Black and Red Tai) were organized into traditional *muong* (see Glossary), each of which was ruled by a member of a noble patrilineal descent group. The *chao muong* (district ruler) and others of the group were considered to have a direct relationship with the spirit of the soil (see ch. 6, Religion). The *chao muong* also held title to the land of the principality.

The *chao muong* was entitled to some of the labor of the commoners under him. Other members of the nobility also had client villages to which they gave military protection in return for agricultural labor.

In the indigenous political structure, there were two levels below the *muong*: the commune, consisting of a number of villages, and the village itself. The *ly truong* (chief of the commune) was always a noble, but the village headman was invariably a commoner. The village headman was traditionally selected by the heads of households from the respected and wealthy commoners of the community.

Under French rule the *chao muong* lost control of the land; it was allocated to household heads. The French also sought to introduce the principle of election of the *chao muong* and the *ly truong*. Under both the French and the Royal Lao Government, however, these posts continued to be held by members of the nobility.

The Lu of northernmost Houa Khong Province were part of a larger group of Lu, most of them in southern Yunnan in Communist China, who were organized into a number of *muong* controlled by a paramount chief (sometimes referred to as a king). One of these principalities, Muong Sing in Houa Khong Province, has been a part of Laos since the beginning of French rule in the area.

The head of Muong Sing is called the *chao fa*, and the position is hereditary in the male line. High positions in the court of the *chao fa* are held by members of the nobility. Traditionally among the Lu of China (about whom there is much more information than the Lu of Laos), an administrative bureaucracy was staffed by members of the nobility, but there were also local chiefs, direct dependents of the *chao fa*, who administered local areas and were entitled to a part of the taxes, labor, and other levies paid by the people in their territories. Members of the nobility also held land and had traditional rights to labor, taxes, and goods from the ordinary people who worked the land. It is not clear how much of this applied to the Lu of Laos, but it is likely that the French attempted, as they did among other Tai tribes, to distribute land to household heads.

Most tribal Tai, in 1971, lived in areas that were dominated by the NLHS. Houa Phan Province, for example, which had not been under Royal Lao Government control for a decade, had a population estimated in the mid-1960s as being approximately two-thirds tribal Tai.

## LAO THEUNG

The Lao Theung, or Mon-Khmer-speaking hill tribes, are thought to make up approximately one-quarter of the total population of Laos. One estimate in 1969 was that the Lao Theung numbered 675,000. Members of various Lao Theung ethnic groups are to be found throughout the country, living on the mountainsides at elevations below 3,500 feet. They are believed by the Lao to have been the original inhabitants of the land of Laos; this belief receives ceremonial recognition in such annual rites as the reenactment in Luang Prabang, in the form of a game of hockey, of the ancient conquest of the Lao Theung by the Tai-speaking Lao invaders.

The Khmu, who are the most numerous of the Lao Theung tribes, grow some opium. Trade with the Lao among the Khmu has usually been carried out through the mediation of an ethnic Lao middleman. The Khmu were formerly also connected to the Lao by a traditional obligation to provide certain unpaid labor at the behest of the Lao official in the valley. The Khmu have a reputation for timidity and placidity. Many work as wage laborers for the Lao, who find them docile and unassertive.

For many years not only Khmu but also members of other Lao Theung groups have worked part time in the Laotian lowlands, and substantial numbers have gone to the valleys of Thailand for short periods to earn money to buy goods that have traditional prestige value in their home communities, such as gongs, metal drums, cloth, silver, and buffalo. This temporary migration for the purpose of earning money was reported as still continuing in the 1960s. In the early 1970s Lao Theung were being recruited into the irregular armed forces of the royal government (see ch. 14, National Defense and Internal Security).

The Lao Theung are the tribal peoples least esteemed by the Lao and most directly dominated by them. They have been virtually unrepresented in the royal governmental hierarchy above the level of canton (*tasseng*—see Glossary). The NLHS has indicated an interest in the Lao Theung, and it has gained adherents among them and has given some leadership responsibilities. An important NLHS leader in 1971, Sithone Kommadam, was an ethnic Lao Theung from the Loven group of the Bolovens Plateau in southern Laos.

Information on the social structure of Lao Theung villages is available only for the Lamet, a relatively small group, and, to a lesser extent, for the Khmu. Both the Khmu and Lamet are northern uplands peoples; little is known of the southern uplands groups.

Available material does, however, suggest that there are differences in wealth in most villages inhabited by Lao Theung and that such differences affect, for example, marriage and funerary practices. These villages have headmen, but beyond their role as links between Lao officials and villagers (in the collection of taxes and the transmission of orders) the authority of these headmen is not clear.

In the precolonial system of the Lamet there was no true headman. An individual, sometimes known as a priest-chief, was responsible for sacrifices made to various spirits of the village. He had the responsibility for maintaining order in the village, so that the spirits were not disturbed, and for supervising the men's house in the village. The office of priest was hereditary in the male line; in the absence of a son, the post went to a brother or a brother's son.

Under the French these priests were appointed as village headmen, but they exercised little real secular authority unless they were also wealthy and has been admitted to the status of *lem* (wealthy man). The report on the Lamet is based on research undertaken in the 1930s, but it is likely that the institution of the priest-chief has survived, except in areas where the NLHS has abolished or modified it.

Among the Lamet a clear line is drawn between the *lem* and the ordinary man (*to*). The status of *lem* is achieved by acquiring wealth in the form of buffalo, gongs, and bronze drums, but a man's status as a *lem* must be acknowledged by established *lem*, who hold a feast in his honor.

The status of *lem* is not hereditary, but there was a tendency for the members of the families of wealthy men to intermarry, if only because a poor man could not make the marriage payments demanded by a *lem* for his daughter. Although the status group of *lem* is open, it is likely that there is a tendency for the status to run in specific family lines.

The group of *lem* apparently functions as dispute settlers and decisionmakers for the village. There is no information on whether the *lem* of a village always act as a cohesive group.

The Khmu household is quite variable in composition. A newly married couple usually goes to live with the wife's family for three or four years. The couple may then return to the household of the husband's father or establish an entirely new household. A household rarely contains more than three nuclear families, and households consisting of only one such family are not uncommon.

The Khmu are organized into patrilineal descent groups (lineages), which regulate marriage in that members must marry outside the group. A newly married man generally lives with his wife's family and works for her father. If he is unable to make the necessary marriage payments, this arrangement becomes permanent. If the marriage payments are made, the couple may move out, either to the husband's father's house or, more usually, to establish their own household.

## MEO

Estimates on the number of Meo, the major Lao Sung group in Laos, vary from a low of under 50,000 in the early 1950s to a high of 300,000 to 500,000 made in 1971. The larger figures were presumably nearer to being correct in the early 1970s, given the estimate in an unofficial press report of 10,000 Meo killed in action in the 1961-71 decade and the estimate by a United States Agency for International Development (AID) relief official that, as of the end of 1964, there were nearly 90,000 Meo refugees receiving assistance from AID (see ch. 14, National Defense and Internal Security; ch. 5, Health, Education, and Welfare). The Meo have been the Laotian ethnic group most directly affected by the war in Laos and have provided a significant portion of the troops fighting on behalf of the royal government.

The Meo of Laos are members of an ethnic group that has several million members living in Thailand, North Vietnam, and the provinces of Kweichow and Yunnan and the Kwangsi Chuang Autonomous Region in the People's Republic of China (PRC). In North Vietnam alone, there were estimated in the 1960s to be approximately 220,000 Meo concentrated in formally recognized Meo districts in the Tay Bac Autonomous Zone, which borders on areas under NLHS domination. Meo from North Vietnam have reportedly been used by the NLHS and its North Vietnamese allies as propagandists in the Meo areas of Laos. The Meo of northern Thailand have been targets of Chinese Communist infiltration since the late 1950s.

In Laos the Meo, before the outbreak of heavy fighting in the latter 1960s, were most numerous in Xieng Khouang and Houa Phan provinces. (How many remained in Houa Phan Province in the NLHS zone in 1971 was unknown.) As is the case with Meo elsewhere, they then lived in mountain villages situated at elevations above 3,500 feet, where they grew rice and corn by the slash-and-burn method, raised livestock, and grew opium as a cash crop. Meo are well known for their high level of initiative and for their relatively strong social organization, as compared to other hill peoples, based on patrilineal ties.

The Meo have been successful in maintaining their ethnic identity in matters of dress and in many other ways, but they also have strong ties, both linguistic and cultural, to China, from which they migrated to Southeast Asia comparatively recently—within the past one or two centuries. One scholar has dated the Meo pioneer wave in Laos to 1840.

Compared to other hill peoples, the Meo have a high social and political position vis-à-vis the Lao, although they allegedly have had to face considerable Lao condescension and discrimination. Their superior position, compared to other hill tribes, is perhaps in part because of their aggressiveness, energy, and relative organizational strength and perhaps in part because of the wealth they have amassed through the sale of opium. They sell their opium primarily to traveling Chinese merchants, many of whom are Ho (Yunnanese Chinese), but since the 1950s the Meo have increasingly brought their opium to the valley market towns, obviating the need for the Ho middleman. The Meo village is obviously different from other upland tribal settlements because unlike other Laotians, the Meo set their houses on the ground, never on stilts.

Alone among the non-Lao, the Meo of Xieng Khouang Province have had, since the French colonial period, an officially recognized paramount chief to represent their interests at the provincial level. In other provinces each *muong* (administrative district) is administered by an appointed *chao muong* subordinate to the provincial governor. In the case of Xieng Khouang Province, however, there are four *muong* but five *chao muong*. The fifth is designated paramount chief of the Meo population throughout the province. The incumbent chief in 1971 was Touby Lyfong, son of one of the richest Meo in the province. He was also a schoolmate of the provincial governor, who is a descendant of the former prince of Xieng Khouang. Touby Lyfong is heir to a long-existing alliance of friendship and mutual advantage that has connected his clan within the White Meo subgroup of the Meo of Xieng Khouang Province with the royal house of that province.

Faydang, the leading NLHS Meo figure in 1971, is a chief of a rival clan of White Meo, although he and Touby Lyfong are closely connected to one another by marriage. This connection stems not from friendship but rather from the Meo customary law that forbids marriage between persons of the same clan.

The Meo have a tradition of a king and great chiefdoms and a record indicating the ability to organize on a fairly large scale temporarily, usually for military purposes. Nevertheless, the Meo in Laos have shown no indications of a permanent system of authority extending beyond the village.

The Meo village consists of a number of households. In Xieng Khouang Province the average number of households in a village is eight, but there are some villages with as many as forty households. A Meo household consists of an extended family, in which sons bring their brides to live, more or less permanently, in the household of their fathers. Sometimes the household persists as an extended family even after the father's death, the eldest son becoming the head. A married son may establish his own house after a brief period of postmarital residence in his father's house, but the new house is usually near his father's, and he remains under his father's authority. The extended family, under the senior male's authority, is apparently the significant producing and consuming unit, but the precise allocation of rights and responsibilities within the unit is not clear except for an emphasis on the prerogatives of seniority.

The significant unit beyond the extended family household is the patrilineal clan, each of which has a name and a myth of origin. In some cases a clan may be coextensive with a village, but more often there are two, and sometimes more, clans represented in a village. Available information does not make it clear whether any one clan is represented in more than one village.

The head of a clan is ordinarily its eldest man in the senior line. It is not clear what his secular powers and responsibilities are, but he presumably represents the clan in its relations with other clans. He is also believed to have special powers that permit him to communicate with the clan's ancestors in specific rituals.

Seniority seems to be the major criterion for ordering relations within the clan. A member of the group refers to others in it as his seniors and his juniors, and respectful address and behavior are required of the latter to the former.

Polygyny is permitted, and wealthy Meo often have more than one wife. Even some who are not as well off may acquire a second wife by marrying the wife of a deceased brother.

Traditionally, it was customary for the eldest son to inherit the bulk of the father's property, although his widow (or the brother who married her) retained control until her death. Under Lao influence there has been a tendency toward equal sharing of the father's property by all the sons.

Unlike the headman of a Lao village, who is merely first among equals, the Meo headman has substantial authority and the respect of those under him. This is particularly true in a village that is settled by a single clan, where he is head of both clan and village. On important decisions he must, however, consult the household heads. Among his other powers and responsibilities, the village head acts as a judge in disputes between villagers, sees to it that the village trails are maintained, and has an important voice in deciding on village migration. Meo village members migrate when the local soil has been exhausted, but the exact timing and direction of the migration have to be decided.

The Meo have a tradition of a powerful kingdom whose king was also commander in chief of all adult men who bore arms. These men chose the successor to the king from among his sons. Another tradition, perhaps more relevant to Meo organization in the mid-twentieth century, is that there were great chieftains who ruled over a number of villages (the number usually cited is twenty). Each chief was elected by arms-bearing men for his lifetime. The organization was voluntary; the men could depose the chief, and important decisions required their unanimous consent in a popular assembly. The set of villages under such a great chief might change after his death. Each village remained autonomous in the sense that it could change affiliation.

A Meo pattern that seems to be related to the tradition of kingship involves a belief (most clearly expressed by the Meo of Thailand but applicable to those of Laos) that sometime a Meo king will arise as a liberator and lead the Meo against those who oppress them. An example is provided by a French account of a Meo uprising in 1919, which spread from Tonkin. According to the account, one of the leaders who took refuge in Laos was able to convince Laotian Meo that a prophet from the sky had predicted the coming of a king who "accomplishing the will of heaven, was to bring them happiness, peace and prosperity." Meo armed bands did march against Xieng Khouang, Luang Prabang, and Samneua; but they were defeated by French military forces, and their leader was killed. A similar belief, involving the coming of Jesus Christ (riding in a jeep and dressed in American clothes) to lead the Meo to victory over their oppressors, was reported in the late 1950s (see ch. 6, Religion). Although this version was clearly influenced by Christian ideas, the pattern is consistent with older Meo conceptions.

## OTHER TRIBAL PEOPLES

Other ethnic groups of Laos include the Man (Yao) and various Tibeto-Burman speakers. The Man—who, like the Meo, are organized into exogamous patrilineal clans, grow opium, and live at high altitudes—were estimated in the early 1960s to number between 500,000 and 1 million. More than half lived in southern mainland China, and the remainder were in northern Laos, northern Thailand, North Vietnam, and northeastern Burma. A social scientist living in a Man community in Thailand in the mid-1960s estimated that Thailand at that time had 10,000 Man and that Laos had many more. Many of those in Thailand at that time had migrated from Laos since 1945.

A saying attributed to the Man is, "One is respected for three things: money, intelligence, and good heart—and money is the great thing." Money (silver) is the means by which all things are accomplished. Payments of silver to an explicitly recognized hierarchy of spirits as part of religious rites provide the individual with a respected position in the spirit world, to be occupied after death. This position is indicated during life by ranked titles, which indicate what rituals the titleholder has undertaken to achieve high status after death.

The individual's spirit rank, however, does not provide social status or aid in this life. In order to have high status and freedom to do what one wishes, money is the chief necessity. To marry, one must be able to pay the customary price in silver; to be free to flout the law one must be able to pay the fines. For these reasons the person who is rich, even if he is not clever or generous, is feared and respected as a person who can do as he likes.

Although the constituent households of a Man village cooperate in ritual activities having to do with propitiating the spirit world, in secular concerns households act independently. Some Man villages have no headman; others do; still others accept as headman a person from another ethnic group. Most headmen gain their positions by having achieved success in mediating disputes.

The role of mediator is of great importance to the Man since they are greatly concerned about avoiding any direct antagonistic confrontation. A breakup of the household is reportedly nearly always preferred to familial dissension. A reputation for being a good mediator comes in part from achievements in this field but is also greatly enhanced by the reputation of the individual's ancestors. It is believed that one's ancestors guide one's soul and therefore influence one's character and abilities.

The Tibeto-Burman speakers live in villages interspersed among those of other tribal communities, commonly those of the Lao Theung, the Meo, and the Man. As with the Man, the headman of a village of Akha (the most numerous Tibeto-Burman group in Laos) is generally chosen by the villagers for reasons having to do with achievement rather than inheritance.

Among the Akha the extended family household seems to be the significant unit. A newly married man and his wife join his father's household. If they eventually leave, as they do in some Akha villages, they commonly live in a house adjacent to that of the husband's father. It is not clear how much authority the father then retains.

Although the evidence is not decisive, it seems that the Akha have both patrilineal clans and lineages. The lineages are localized segments of the clans. Lineages representing several clans may be located in one village. A man or woman should, and apparently does, marry outside his own lineage.

Of these kin-based groups, the extended family is probably the important economic unit, producing most of its needs and consuming most of its production. The head of the extended family household holds title to movable property and to cultivated fields. The Lahu, another Tibeto-Burman group, are also reported to have patrilineal descent groups.

## RESIDENT FOREIGNERS

In 1966 it was estimated that resident Vietnamese constituted 7 percent of the total population of Laos; resident Chinese, 2 percent; and French, a fraction of 1 percent. There were also a substantial Thai population and a small number of persons from the United States, India, Pakistan, the Khmer Republic (Cambodia), and the Philippines. Most foreigners, except the Chinese, have tended to live primarily in major urban areas.

About 50 percent of the Chinese lived outside the major urban areas. Some of the rural Chinese, particularly the Ho, have a traditional role as peddlers and commercial middlemen to the people of the remote rural communities of mainland Southeast Asia, especially the hill tribe villages. The half of the resident Chinese population that lives in major urban centers comes primarily from Fukien and Kwangtung provinces; in the mid-1960s they constituted one-fourth of the population residing in the major urban areas

Foreigners constitute a high proportion of the professional and skilled labor force. Certain occupations have tended to be dominated by specific foreign communities. The Chinese have predominated in urban trade and commerce, finance, and management, whereas the Vietnamese have worked primarily in service industries and small-scale commerce and as craftsmen and artisans. The French residents in Laos in the 1960s were primarily teachers and managers or directors of French-owned companies. Some Thai were engaged in service and technical capacities; they and the Filipinos also contributed personnel to United States government agencies in Laos. The Filipinos were the major ethnic group in professional medicine in 1970.

The United States personnel in Laos were engaged primarily in implementing the substantial military and economic assistance, information, and welfare programs of their government and of private organizations (see ch. 5, Health, Education, and Welfare; ch. 11, Character and Structure of the Economy; ch. 14, National Defense and Internal Security). Because of the size and scope of these programs, United States personnel had greater power, influence, and prestige than any other foreigners in the area under control of the royal government.

The role of foreign Asians in urban areas was diminishing in importance in the 1960s and early 1970s as large numbers of indigenous Laotians moved to the towns and cities. As early as 1960, for example, the urban growth among the population as a whole was twice as great as that of the total resident Chinese population, and urbanization has accelerated since then. The large increase in the number of indigenous persons having at least a primary education was likely to promote the eventual assimilation of the urban areas—formerly essentially foreign enclaves—into the indigenous society (see ch. 2, Physical Environment and Population).

In addition to members of long-established foreign communities, a very large number of foreigners in Laos in mid-1971 were participating directly or indirectly in the war there; presumably their presence was temporary. This group included North Vietnamese soldiers (estimated in early 1971 to be as many as 100,000), an unknown number of persons from the PRC who were engaged in building and defending a road network in northern Laos in NLHS-controlled areas, and a comparatively small number of Thai irregulars serving on the side of the Royal Lao Government under Laotian command. Available information indicated that the North Vietnamese were highly influential politically and socially in NLHS areas (see ch. 14, National Defense and Internal Security).

## THE WAR AND SOCIETY

The war in Laos divided the country into two parts, and from 1961 to 1971 particular areas and populations were shifted by the fortunes of war from one side to the other. In many cases the people living in the war zone have experienced several shifts back and forth. According to the results of studies made in 1966, changing security situations, which had affected some areas for several decades, had tended to accentuate a traditional lack of commitment on the part of rural Laotians to persons and institutions beyond the circle of family, friends, and fellow villagers.

The impact of the war on rural life is suggested by the AID estimates of the number of refugees receiving United States support as of June 1, 1971, which was approximately 315,000. In Xieng Khouang Province, an area that has been in the midst of the war zone for years, it was estimated that, of the 198,000 people living there (according to 1969 official royal government estimates), 12,000 were with the NLHS (according to an early 1970 unofficial estimate), and over 160,000 (as of June 1971) were in United States-aided refugee sites (see ch. 2, Physical Environment and Population). The refugees consisted chiefly of elderly persons, females, and children. A United States Department of State estimate as of early 1970 was that the refugee population at that time was 204,000 persons—approximately 40 percent Meo, 30 percent Lao Theung, 20 percent ethnic Lao, and 10 percent other. The criterion for refugee status, according to a private humanitarian relief program administrator, was that the individual had been unable to harvest two successive rice crops (see ch. 5, Health, Education, and Welfare). When two consecutive harvests had been completed, the farmer was regarded as self-sufficient and ceased to be eligible for refugee support.

Of all the ethnic groups of Laos, the Meo have been the most directly involved in the war. Although the NLHS has had a contingent of Meo fighting on its side—led as of 1971 by the Meo chieftain Faydang—the overwhelming majority of Meo have supported the royal government and have provided the bulk of its so-called irregular forces (see ch. 14, National Defense and Internal Security). Although other ethnic groups have not been as affected as the Meo, the direct effects of the war have been considerable for all Laotians, in terms of men in arms, casualties, refugees, and crops and property destroyed or confiscated. The number of indigenous Laotians fighting on behalf either of the royal government or the NLHS numbered in mid-1971 an estimated 135,000, mostly on t[illegible] side of the royal government. The number of killed and wou[illegible]d during the 1961-71 period amounted to tens of thousands; bet[illegible]n January 1968 and April 1971 alone nearly 12,000 persons were reported to have died on the side of the Royal Lao Government, and over 31,000 of the enemy were reported killed. The bulk of the casualties of the royal government's forces were sustained by ethnic Meo; on the other side most of the dead were North Vietnamese soldiers fighting on behalf of the NLHS.

Plans and programs for the integration of refugees into the civil population in areas under royal government control have emphasized efforts to introduce the refugees into the small, but expanding, monetized sector of the society. The AID estimated in a 1971 publication that approximately 500,000 Laotians in royal government territory lived in places where economic activity was predominantly monetized. It also stated that an AID program was attempting to integrate approximately 46,000 refugees into the monetized sector. These were refugees who had been relocated in areas near commercial centers—on the Vientiane Plain and near the cities of Pakse, Savannakhet, and Luang Prabang. The AID programmers envisioned the refugees first becoming self-sufficient in rice production and then developing handicraft skills or commercial enterprises—such as silk or cash crop production—that would involve them in the monetized sector of the economy.

The same AID publication stated that the problem of reintegrating the Meo and other tribal refugees was unsolved and would probably remain insoluble until hostilities ceased. Meo and other hill tribe refugees in royal government territory have not been able, under existing wartime conditions, to follow their traditional pattern of slash-and-burn agriculture, with its requirement of considerable mobility and large amounts of land.

In addition to the direct effects of the war on society, indirect effects of significance have included an increase in urbanization, although it is unknown to what extent this was caused solely by the war. There has also been the introduction of new ideas, values, and institutions through foreign aid programs and their associated political and social ideologies. These innovations—in education, medicine, irrigation, community development, and other aspects—have affected the social structure of the country. Most such innovations in areas under royal government control stem from United States activity, and those in NLHS areas, from activity of the North Vietnamese.

### Social Innovations in Royal Government Areas

An example of some of the kinds of innovative impact on society of United States activity in the country is provided by an eyewitness account of an AID program that began in 1963 for developing a cluster of nine villages in the northern Nam Ngum

River area. The cluster program was designed to concentrate aid efforts in one well-populated area on a number of different projects simultaneously as a means of encouraging villagers in the surrounding countryside to follow methods used successfully in the cluster zone (see ch. 5, Health, Education, and Welfare).

The program included the building of access roads, schools, dispensaries, and offices at the cluster center for use by government technical services representatives and the establishment of demonstration farm plots and livestock improvement programs. Representatives from the villages in the cluster were organized into a council to decide priorities; all villagers in the zone were expected to contribute as much as they could to each project in money or goods as well as to supply all of the labor.

The program ran into difficulties partly because villagers who lived nearby reacted negatively to their not being included in the cluster zone and partly because of such factors as the tendency of the royal government's technical personnel to bypass the local, conservative district chief, thus creating friction. An early problem also was that lack of security in the area made likely the confiscation of surpluses of goods by NLHS forces. This resulted in the people of the development cluster (as well as the area people outside it) hoarding their cash rather than spending it or investing it.

When security improved, however, the program began to show results. In March 1966 the entire district (seventy-six villages) was admitted into the development zone. With better security and technology, more villagers were willing to grow rice surpluses and to spend money on fertilizer and other previously untried products.

Many villagers became better informed about national conditions and politics because of personal experience in participating in projects with representatives of the government technical services and from listening to transistor radios, popular consumer items among the newly affluent of the zone. With this greater sophistication came a notable shift in attitudes of villagers toward officials. Whereas previously the rural Laotians were generally respectful toward officials, regarding themselves as inferior, some became outspoken in their criticism whenever they found official incompetence or dishonesty. Candidates for election to the National Assembly in 1967, moreover, found the villagers in the development zone far more demanding than formerly and ready to remind incumbents of pledges made in the past over the radio. An AID official in mid-1969 suggested that changes in attitudes and expectations among villagers who had experienced major social and economic innovations as a result of various foreign aid program were likely to disrupt the political and social balance in the area under royal government control.

The inability of the local traditional leadership to protect the common people from the hardships and dangers of war, in both royal government and NLHS territory, has also probably reduced the authority and prestige of that leadership. Other factors presumably influencing attitudes are the egalitarian concepts of United States personnel and the stress placed upon egalitarianism by NLHS propagandists.

The primacy of the war in Laotian national life has led to the domination of the royal government's civilian provincial administration by the dominant regional military commands, with senior military personnel playing important roles in provincial affairs. In this connection, an AID official has asserted that some Laotian commercial interests and the military had helped to keep interest rates and transportation costs high and prices low to agricultural producers; he also stated that charges were levied by military personnel on commodities shipped between military regions.

## Social Innovations in NLHS Areas

Since the mid-1950s in Phong Saly and Houa Phan provinces the NLHS and its associates—the People's Party of Laos (Phak Pasason Lao—PPL) and North Vietnamese party cadres—have established permanent administrative machinery to serve the areas under their control. By 1971 the NLHS had managed to implement various changes in social organization and to promote numerous values that were new to Laos.

One innovation has been in the character and qualifications of the leadership. In royal government areas social and political leaders of more than local importance have tended to be drawn from the powerful Lao royal, noble, and mandarinate families (headed by members of this group who had Western-style education). Although persons with such qualifications constituted a part of the leadership in NLHS areas, the politically most powerful leaders were persons of modest backgrounds who had close ties of association, education, and empathy with the North Vietnamese communist movement; in essence, they owed their prominence in the NLHS to North Vietnamese support. North Vietnamese-supported Laotian leadership was likely to be even more prominent as the 1970s progressed since it was being augmented steadily by individuals trained in North Vietnamese and NLHS schools that employed North Vietnamese-developed curricula. These schools produced cadres for the NLHS organization at all levels of administration.

Also, a significant portion of the senior NLHS leadership was non-Lao, chiefly persons who had previously acquired status through inheritance of achievement in their own tribal groups. This stemmed, in part at least, from efforts by the NLHS to appear as the champion of the minority peoples of Laos (who make up roughly 80 percent of the population living in NLHS territories).

In NLHS areas people have been persuaded or coerced into forming, and participating as active members in, a number of new formal organizations. This activity was in sharp contrast to the general reluctance of many Lao farmers, as shown in a 1967 survey made in the Vientiane Plain, to join formal organizations; only one-third of the farmers included in that survey belonged to such an organization, and the most popular was the committee that existed for the purpose of supporting the village *wat*.

NLHS cadres at the village level have led the formation of new organizations—for farmers, young men, young women, and the elderly. Virtually every member of the villages in NLHS areas was reported to belong to one or another such organization.

In addition, the villagers have been organized into study groups, consisting generally of five to ten family households. These groups have met every five days under the guidance of a responsible cadre to receive political indoctrination and "to heighten their own and one another's social consciousness." This has involved activating the villagers' loyalty to the peasant class and to the NLHS and its goals and intensifying their hatred of the enemy—the Royal Lao Government and its allies. Another purpose of these meetings has been to develop techniques of criticism and self-criticism among the people, these techniques being the main methods used by the NLHS to enforce compliance to its directives.

At such meetings the traditional value (at least among the Lao) placed on avoidance of face-to-face antagonism or conflict is ignored. Ruthless criticism of the faults of fellow members is encouraged as being necessary to reform oneself and others in order that the group may serve the collectivity more effectively.

The traditional Lao rules of courtesy, requiring that participants in social intercourse always adhere to the respect forms that indicate relative status, are condemned as "reactionary" or "feudal." Whereas the Lao Buddhist sees society as neccessarily hierarchic, the result of *karma* (see Glossary) accumulated over the ages, the NLHS promotes the view of society as composed of equals with differences in function properly resulting only from differences in ability (see ch. 6, Religion). People in the NLHS zone are told, for example, never to use the form of "yes" employed by inferiors to superiors. Leaders at all levels are induced to avoid any appearance of setting themselves above the people they lead. Cadres are obliged to eat, dress, and house themselves similarly to the common people. Persons of conspicuously greater wealth than their fellow villagers have had their surpluses removed either by force or by persuasion. Occasions upon which wealth was traditionally displayed, such as *wat* fairs, village festivals, weddings, and funerals, have become far fewer and less lavish in NLHS areas.

The equality of the sexes is allegedly promoted not only in propaganda but also in practice, women being assigned positions of responsibility in civil and military affairs. In addition, the traditional superiority of age over youth has been challenged. For the NLHS, young people are more valuable to the cause than are their elders. It has been alleged by outside observers that efforts have been made to keep young people apart from their elders, either in the army, at school, or in separate organizations, in order to keep the elders from passing along their "out-of-date" ideas and attitudes.

Although the NLHS has openly attacked Buddhist institutions only in areas where non-Buddhists predominate, it has everywhere opposed the Buddhist value system. The Buddhists emphasize toleration and seek the middle way between extremes; they insist on the need for each individual to search independently for his salvation. The qualities most highly prized by Buddhist Laotians are compassion, loving kindness, sympathetic joy in the happiness of others, equanimity, and detachment. The NLHS leadership apparently places higher value on honesty, hard work, loyalty to the collectivity, and revolutionary enthusiasm, values that tend to conflict with those of the Buddhists.

In addition to the use of study sessions and "merit books" (in which responsible cadres mark down individual achievements and failings), more severe forms of coercion, such as isolation, removal to reeducation camps, and execution after secret trial, were reportedly being used in the late 1960s to induce the desired changes in popular attitudes and behavior in NLHS areas. Opposition to regimentation and to some NLHS demands, such as forced portage, have motivated many thousands to leave their homes for royal government territory, in spite of NLHS efforts to keep them.

# CHAPTER 5
# HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE

In 1971 health, education, and welfare—like all other aspects of the society—were heavily influenced by a socioeconomic revolution fostered by external forces. The great scarcity of human and material resources had encouraged the authorities in each part of the country—the Royal Lao Government and the Lao Patriotic Front (Neo Lao Hak Sat—NLHS)—to turn to outside sources of support. For the Royal Lao Government these sources were the United States and, to a much lesser extent, other Western nations. For the NLHS the single direct source was the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam), whose advisers carried on an unremitting indoctrination of the people in Marxist-Leninist thought, aimed at a radical transformation of Laotian society into one closely following the North Vietnamese model.

Both the royal government and the NLHS were handicapped by endemic problems—a small and dispersed population, a dearth of trained personnel, a lack of organizational experience, poor communications, and few production facilities (see ch. 2, Physical Environment and Population; ch. 11, Character and Structure of the Economy).

The Royal Lao Government had assumed basic responsibility for public health and medical care when the country became independent. Relying heavily on foreign aid, it had made considerable progress in continuing and enlarging the modern health facilities, first introduced by the French, and in training general medical personnel. By 1971, however, there were, by Western standards, still very few fully qualified doctors in the area of the country under its control, and there was a great shortage of medical and sanitation techniques of all sorts. Dispensaries, sometimes widely dispersed, and mobile clinics were the only local sources of modern medical care available to the villagers. Without abandoning all traditional ideas and methods, the people had accepted many of the concepts and procedures of modern medicine, but group hygiene and the general public attitude toward modern sanitation did not meet Western scientific standards.

Since the early 1950s the Royal Lao Government has devoted great attention to developing a modern school system geared to the needs of economic and social advancement. By 1970 over 210,000 young people were attending public school in the country, although fewer than 50,000 had attended in 1964. The system had grown despite political instability and armed conflict, insufficient funds, a lack of trained teachers and administrators, and vast ethnic diversity. Still, in 1971 school attendance remained below a desirable level, distribution of school attendance continued to be geographically and socially uneven, and the educational system as a whole had achieved only a limited extension to the ethnic minorities.

In 1971 the areas under the control of the Royal Lao Government had no overall social welfare system. A number of programs aimed at raising the general level of living and building a social and physical base for economic development were enjoying some success. The main objective was the development of basic facilities, such as schools, dispensaries, markets, and water supply, in rural communities. The projects were intended not only to bring the dispersed and often isolated rural people and ethnic minorities into a more modern world but also to integrate them into the national life and create a greater sense of nationhood.

Of more immediate urgency was an emergency program to care for several hundred thousand refugees displaced by the fighting and by NLHS activities. Where possible, tribal refugees generally remained in areas adjacent to those from which they had been displaced. Ethnic Lao refugees, on the other hand, were usually moved to or near Vientiane and other Mekong River communities. The refugee and other programs were all enterprises of the Royal Lao Government, but they depended heavily on technical and financial aid from foreign sources—mainly the United States.

By 1971, in the border provinces that formed the base of the NLHS administration, a virtual government apparatus had emerged (see ch. 9, Political Dynamics). It had its own administrative structure and a set of social and economic policies formulated without reference to the programs of the Royal Lao Government in Vientiane (see ch. 8, Political System and Values). A network of North Vietnamese advisers had become the single most important outside influence affecting the character and orientation of the NLHS regime.

The North Vietnamese advisory activities were conducted with a view to secrecy so as to be able to present a picture of a partnership between equals—a difficult feat in view of the vast organizational superiority of one partner over the other and the impressive range of North Vietnamese assistance efforts in the NLHS zone of Laos. The North Vietnamese contribution to the NLHS administration had been particularly valuable in the field of medicine.

Beginning in 1967 the NLHS had vigorously attempted to organize an educational system, starting with the primary grades and including an active program of adult education. The director of the NLHS information office in Hanoi claimed in 1970 that there were 60,000 children enrolled in the first three grades. By 1971 some secondary schools had been established in the NLHS zone—there were no institutions of higher learning—but it appeared likely that for some time after 1971 the young Laotians would continue to depend on the North Vietnamese for much secondary and most technical training.

The arrangements in the late 1970s and early 1970s for higher education of students from the NLHS zone appeared to be a potential source of some friction. Most students given opportunities for higher education were sent to North Vietnam. A much smaller number of students, all of whom were sons and daughters of prominent families, received scholarships to study in the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Soviet Union, and even fewer were sent to study in the East European countries. The new Laotian cadres for the NLHS zone seemed in this period, however, to be drawn from those who had been educated in North Vietnam. One analyst reasoned that observers might ultimately expect to see in the NLHS zone the development of a conflict of generations as well as tensions caused by differences in social background and education.

## CONDITIONS IN THE ROYAL LAO GOVERNMENT AREA

### Health

#### Attitudes Toward Disease and Medical Treatment

Although attitudes toward disease and medicine differ somewhat among the various ethnic groups, some understanding of the pattern among the ethnic Lao can contribute to a basic grasp of minority tribal patterns as well. Not all of the traditional beliefs of the ethnic Lao about the causes of specific ailments are compatible with Buddhist doctrines. In general, diseases are thought to result from pathological causes, the intervention of *phi* (spirits), the machinations of unfriendly sorcerers, or the departure from the body of one or more of its thirty-two spirits (*kwan* ) (see ch. 6, Religion).

Treatment for an illness depends upon identification of the cause. The herb doctor, who handles most cases, combines prayers and ritual formulas with the use of a variety of herbs, roots, powdered bones and horns, and other materials. His knowledge, heavily influenced by the traditional medical practices of India and China, has been handed down orally from generation to generation, usually within a single family. Most housewives know at least some of the more common remedies, which often have therapeutic qualities found in Western formulas.

It is believed that the body houses thirty-two spirits, one for each bodily function or intellectual faculty. Only when all thirty-two are present and working is the body well. If one wanders off for some reason, the corresponding organ ceases to function. In such cases the healer, who is usually an elderly monk, must entice the wandering spirit to return by performing certain ritual acts.

Many Western medical techniques had by 1971 been accepted as complementing, but not necessarily replacing, traditional practices. The increasing acceptance of Western medical practices after the country became independent was accelerated by the government's special emphasis on making more modern medical service available to the countrypeople and on making them aware of its value. In none of the villages, and not even in Vientiane, were facilities, or the understanding of the need for them, fully adequate by 1971. Where available, they were eagerly sought, but traditional practices continued to exist. Even the better educated Lao might resort to both traditional practitioners and Western-trained doctors and technicians.

### Sanitation

The people like to be clean. They bathe frequently, using a harsh, locally made soap, but they do so in contaminated water, which often infects them with various diseases. The sanitation standards of many hill people, especially the Lao Theung, are particularly poor by modern standards.

Only a few major centers and villages had a sanitary water supply, and still fewer had running water. Surface streams, shallow wells, and rivers were the major sources of water. Almost all Laotians drank unboiled water, although herb tea was popular in some rural areas. The United States Agency for International Development had assisted in expanding the number of wells that provided good water for the villages. Water distribution systems had been constructed in Vientiane and Luang Prabang, but it is doubtful whether they were adequate for the communities as a whole. In some other towns water was brought in by tank trucks and stored in large clay pots.

There was no adequate system of sewage disposal in either rural or urban areas; there were no sewage disposal plants in the cities. Environmental sanitation was essentially primitive and inadequate. Septic tanks and pit privies were found in some sections of a few cities, but indoor toilets were generally lacking; sanitary facilities were, with rare exceptions, nonexistent in the towns and villages, as concrete outdoor latrines were too costly to construct.

There were no precautionary food-handling measures in small shops or village markets. Refrigeration and modern storage plants were not widespread, and there were few facilities for food preservation outside of the major towns. Unsanitary food handling and eating habits were a source of many infections. The habit of eating raw meat and fish caused numerous parasitic infections.

Meals are customarily served in a common bowl set on the floormat, around which the entire family sits; all dip their hands into the bowl. Hands are usually washed before and after eating, but the water used is often polluted. Chopsticks are used by many tribal Tai and by some other hill people of relatively recent migration from China (see ch. 4, Social Systems).

### Disease

During the 1960s and early 1970s modern medicine was making progress in controlling some epidemic diseases. Although many continued to exist as major health problems, inoculations, increased public health facilities, and related programs introduced by the Royal Lao Government or by cooperating foreign agencies, both public and private, were making headway toward improving the general standard of health.

The bad effect of inadequate sanitation on the incidence of disease is exacerbated in Laos by a climate that favors the survival of insects and other disease vectors outside the human body. Mosquitoes are abundant the year round, and the innumerable mosquito breeding places in the forests, rice paddies, and watercourses challenge even the most extensive control measures. Flies of various kinds, lice, fleas, and mites—all disease carriers—thrive in the environment. Because of inadequacies in the normal diet, there was malnutrition among all age groups, which accounted for dietary deficiency diseases and for a lowering of resistance to infection.

Malaria was endemic, and in 1970 it was the most important single cause of sickness, physical inefficiency, and premature death. Found in all parts of the country, its incidence and type varied with latitude and altitude, and it took different forms depending on the mosquito vectors. Incidence among children tested in the more seriously infected regions has run as high as 70 to 80 percent. The government had a mosquito control program to eliminate breeding places around the main towns and many of the villages, and the people were learning to make increasing use of personal protection, such as mosquito nets and insect repellents.

Upper respiratory diseases and pneumonia were common, particularly in the cooler regions of the country. Because of contaminated water and soil there was much dysentery, and the same conditions invited typhoid fever, cholera, and intestinal parasitism. Many people were vaccinated against cholera, but typhoid inoculation was less common.

Small pox occurred in some areas despite fairly extensive vaccination programs. Several types of typhus fever, including the bush or scrub typhus transmitted by a mite, were known to be present, and there were several types of relapsing fever. Dengue fever was fairly widespread and frequent. A substantial incidence of trachoma was caused mainly by the great numbers of flies found around inhabited places. Venereal diseases were widespread, the heaviest incidence occurring in the towns along the Mekong River; gonorrhea was the most common type. There was some leprosy, especially in the southern part of the country; most cases were unregistered and untreated, although there were several leprosariums.

### Medical Personnel and Facilities

In 1971 there were fewer than fifteen foreign-trained Laotian doctors in the Royal Lao Government areas; an additional twenty-four Laotians were expected to complete their medical training abroad by 1974. The majority of the other medical practitioners had received limited medical training, usually in Vietnam or in Cambodia or, since 1957, in the government's four-year medical college in Vientiane. Nurses trained to modern Western standards were almost unknown, but there were about 500 practical nurses with state certificates, who had limited formal and practical training, and several hundred midwives. Training of domestic medical personnel in all categories was accelerating in 1971, but a shortage of well-qualified medical personnel was expected to continue for a number of years.

From 1957 through 1968 the Royal School of Medicine in Vientiane offered a four-year program of limited medical training to persons who had completed the tenth grade. In 1969 the school began a seven-year degree program in conjunction with the University of Lyons Medical School in France and with assistance from the World Health Organization (WHO). The seven-year program was the central part of a gradual expansion of the school aimed at providing full medical-degree training, but the school did not have this status as of mid-1971. In the late 1960s and early 1970s the school graduated each year about thirty-five doctors' assistants, who had a knowledge of most phases of medicine. These graduates were expected, as of mid-1971, after an additional two years' training in Thailand, to be available for staffing hospitals.

As of mid-1971 Laotian medical students depended on other countries, chiefly France, for advanced medical training. There were twenty-six medical students in France in 1969; many of those sent abroad, however, decided not to return to Laos. There were already thirty trained Laotian doctors residing in France in 1969. In addition to Laotians, Laos had forty-eight foreign doctors and eight dentists in 1967. There were reported to be sixteen pharmacists, 727 nurses (mostly practical nurses or those with state certificates), and 347 midwives in 1966; there were ten health or sanitary agents in 1965. These were the most recent years for which statistics were available in mid-1971.

Most of the medical facilities were inadequately equipped. In 1969 there were eighteen principal hospitals: seven run directly by the government with 7,000 inpatients a year; seven operated by Operation Brotherhood (a cooperative enterprise originally sponsored by the junior chambers of commerce of the Philippines, the United States, and several other countries) with 15,000 inpatients and 240,000 outpatients a year; and four operated by the United States economic aid mission. Altogether they provided 1,621 beds. There were eighty-seven rural dispensaries built by the government and 243 rural dispensaries assisted by the United States.

By 1971 over 1,400 persons had been trained or were under training in programs wholly or partially financed by United States foreign aid. Operation Brotherhood conducted the most important program, which in 1971 included assistance to the Royal Lao Government in operating seven government hospitals at Vientiane, Pak Song, Sayaboury, Attopeu, Keng Kok, Vang Vieng, and Saravane. The hospitals had a total of about 350 beds; they were staffed by thirty Filipino doctors, seventy-three Filipino administrative and support personnel, and 384 Laotian employees. They provided inpatient and outpatient care and public health services for the communities in which they were located. These hospitals served also as training centers for technicians and auxiliary nurses. Mobile units, operating from the hospitals, made periodic visits to nearby villages to give physical examinations, carry out immunization programs, and conduct projects aimed at protecting the health of mother and child. Operation Brotherhood also operated over twenty rural dispensaries. An additional seventeen Filipino technicians have been added to public health teams to assist in providing services to refugee relocation areas.

Goals for the work carried out by Operation Brotherhood were to replace the Filipino personnel with trained Laotians sufficient in number to keep the hospitals in operation and to transfer to the Royal Lao Government the administrative and financial responsibility for operating the hospitals. Operation Brotherhood and the government had developed a plan to phase out the Operation Brotherhood contract gradually but in a manner that would not unduly disrupt hospital services. The first step in the phaseout plan was taken in 1969 with the assumption by the government of expenses of local personnel and daily operational costs for two of the seven hospitals.

In the 1963-70 period the Royal Lao Government, with assistance from the United States, trained about 1,200 medical corpsmen and over 200 practical nurses to provide basic medical care for paramilitary personnel and their dependents, for refugees, and for civilian war casualties. Personnel in this program were drawn from indigenous peoples, most of whom had to be taught to read and write Laotian Tai (Lao) before entering the training program. About 150 medical corpsmen and around twenty-five to thirty practical nurses completed training annually. Inservice refresher training was provided to medical personnel to duty. Course material included the structure and policy of the Royal Lao Government, basic treatment and diagnosis for some twenty common diseases, basic sanitation and nutrition, maternal and child health care, and medical reporting techniques.

The United States in 1971 furnished medical supplies and equipment to approximately 290 dispensaries operating in rural areas and war zones. The medical corpsmen and practical nurses working in these dispensaries were supervised by senior Laotian medical personnel, who visited the dispensaries monthly, providing payroll and commodity support, collecting medical reports, and conducting immunization clinics. These Laotian medical personnel were in turn supervised by, and reported to, provincial officials advised by United States medical officials.

In 1969 the construction of the Mahosot Nursing School in Vientiane was completed, and the nursing school accepted its first class. In 1971 it was training thirty registered nurses annually, with United States assistance.

On February 1, 1971, construction began in Vientiane of the 200-bed National Maternal and Child Health Center, which would provide a full range of obstetric, gynecologic, and pediatric care as well as training in family-planning methods for all medical personnel staffing maternal and child health facilities throughout the country. The center was being built adjacent to the government's Mahosot Hospital, with which it would share staff and facilities. In addition, ten rural medical facilities were being renovated to serve as maternal and child health centers, and such centers were being constructed in Luang Prabang, Houei Sai, Savannakhet, Pakse, and Sayaboury. The medical commodities provided for these facilities with United States assistance included vitamins, minerals, steriods, infant formulas, and other drugs and biologicals.

To develop a corps of maternal and child health workers, training within Laos, in Thailand, and in the Phillipines was provided with United States assistance. Training within Laos consisted primarily of short-term inservice training in midwifery, home economics, and nursing. A program had been started under which eighteen midwives, thirty nursing assistants, and twenty-five medical students would receive training annually for service at provincial centers. Four midwifery schools provided two-year training, and the rural midwife of the village received six to eight months' training. Training in Thailand and the Phillippines was more specialized and technical; it included administration of child nutrition centers and advanced training in midwifery, nursing, and family planning. A program for participant training in Thailand of twenty-five medical personnel annually had been initiated.

As there has never been a formal census in Laos, such standard factors as population growth rate, sex and age distribution, and average family size remain estimates. To obtain as many of these basic data as possible, two pilot census surveys were carried out in 1971 on the Vientiane Plain, and a demographic team was evolving the methods of sampling and census techniques to be used for future collection of data.

## Education

### Education in the Society

A 1968 estimate classing only about 25 percent of the population as literate gave an indication of the society's need for a greatly expanded modern educational system. In 1971, despite the advances that had been and were being made, it was clear that the system continued to need expansion and improvement to meet the requirements of a modernizing state.

Education had usually been considered the prerogative of boys, although school attendance by girls had been increasing. Similarly, most instructors at all educational levels were men. The society was in transition, but the traditional image of the woman as a mother and housekeeper who had no need for formal education had yet to undergo substantial change (see ch. 4, Social Systems).

Greater value was placed on education by dwellers in the few urban areas than by the rural people at large, mainly because formal educational facilities of a modern sort were more readily available and the benefits they offered were more discernible in the towns than in the villages. Some modern schooling was being made increasingly available in the countryside, but only at the beginning levels. Complete elementary schooling and any kind of secondary education could be had only in the main towns during the late 1960s and early 1970s.

In 1970 about one-third of the government's civilian employees were schoolteachers, nearly all in the elementary schools. To be an elementary school teacher, however, did not confer any great status, and such teachers were among the lowest paid government workers. This lack of reward for teaching was limited generally to elementary public school teachers. Teachers in schools above the elementary level, who were mainly foreigners, enjoyed relatively good salaries and were looked upon as superior persons. The relation of teacher to society was reflected within the profession itself, where the post of village schoolmaster was considered inferior to that of an urban counterpart, who usually had a better education and earned a somewhat higher salary.

The long predominance of the French educational system, the reliance on French as the language of secondary education, and the practice of seeking higher education at institutions in France were for many years, and continued to be in 1971, important causes for the cultural identification of most of the educated elite of Laos with France as much as with their own country. The most forceful influence on the development of an educational system attuned to the needs of society in the 1970s was the government's effort to fashion a system that would retain the prestige born of the French background but would be distinctly national in orientation and would allow Lao to replace French as the language of instruction at higher levels of education.

School enrollment was low until 1953, when Laos became fully independent, but there had been a rapid expansion since then. Between school year 1953/54 and 1969/70 enrollment grew by more than 10 percent a year. In 1969/70 there were about 200,000 elementary pupils in Royal Lao Government schools compared with fewer than 35,000 in 1953/54. Total enrollment at all levels in public schools in 1969/70 in areas under Royal Lao Government control was over 210,000 pupils (see table 2). An additional 25,751 pupils were enrolled in private schools.

*Table 2. Royal Lao Government, Public Schools, Enrollment, and Teachers, by Level of Education, School Year 1969/70*

| Level of education | Schools | Enrollment | Teachers |
|---|---|---|---|
| Primary | 3,063 | 199,111 | 5,723 |
| Secondary | 18 | 6,352 | 307 |
| Teacher Training | 9 | 3,036 | 448 |
| Higher Education | 3 | 517 | 51 |
| Fine Arts | 2 | 180 | 87 |
| Technical | 3 | 1,172 | 211 |

Source: Adapted from Royal Government of Laos, Ministere du Plan et de la Coopération, Service National de la Statistique, *Bulletin de Statistiques du Laos*, Vientiane, June 1970.

By law, school attendance was compulsory for children between the ages of six and fourteen living within one kilometer (about 0.6 miles) of a school, but penalties were not imposed on parents who failed to enforce attendance. Local communities were required, and very often were willing, to supply materials and labor for school construction and to maintain the established schools, but often they lacked the necessary facilities and expertise to establish an effective educational program. The Royal Lao Government was not in a position to fulfill its own legal obligation by making a school site and other school facilities available for all.

Many families have consequently had to wait for a school to be built before they could send a child to school, and many pupils, particularly in rural areas, did not start school until they were eight or nine years old. Many children were kept at home or taken out of school to assist in agricultural activities, particularly during the planting and harvesting seasons. A United Nations survey found that only 17 percent of the estimated school-age population attended public and private schools in 1956/57; about 36 percent attended school in 1969/70. Because some primary schools offered either a three- or a six-year program and because of the high dropout and grade repetition rates in 1969/70, over three-fourths of the primary students were in the first three years of primary school. The number of students successfully passing the primary school completion examination had, however, risen sharply in the late 1960s.

### Literacy

In the summer of 1968 a study of literacy levels of various sectors of the population was conducted under governmental auspices. The number of persons interviewed was a little over 10,000, of which about 2,000 were students. The study concluded that the rate of literacy—defined as the fourth-grade reading level—among men between fourteen and forty-five years old was 50 to 60 percent. The rate among women between fourteen and thirty-five years old was about 25 percent. In the youngest age group surveyed, those from fourteen to twenty-four years old, the literacy rate was 75 percent for men and about 29 percent for women.

The study found that the difference in comprehension rates between age groups was large for the men; the fourteen- to twenty-four-year-old group was about twice as literate as the twenty-five- to thirty-four-year-old group. For the women, however, the fourteen- to twenty-four-year-old group was about four or five times more literate than the twenty-five- to thirty-four-year-old group. The study viewed this ratio as a testimony to the effectiveness of the country's schools and to the increased education of women.

The survey also measured comparative literacy rates in rural and urban areas. It found that in the urban areas over 41 percent of the men and almost 13 percent of the women were literate; in the rural areas about 37 percent of the men and 10 percent of the women were literate. The study concluded that more women were being educated in the urban areas than in the rural areas.

### Organization and Operation of the School System

The public education system was administered by the Ministry of National Education, and its organization followed the French pattern. Primary education was divided into two cycles of three years each. There were four types of schools at this level: district group elementary schools that provided a full six-year course; elementary schools that provided more than three grades but usually fewer than six; village primary schools, often one-class schools, offering a course of one, two, or three years' duration; and rural centers of community education, which had Buddhist monks or village volunteers as teachers and which gave the first years of the primary school course. Unlike the teachers in the other classes of elementary schools, the teachers in the rural centers of community education were not regular employees of the Ministry of National Education but were given a small monthly allowance by the ministry. In addition, there were private elementary schools for the urban minority communities, usually going through the third year, although some offered the full six years. At the end of six years of study in the primary school, pupils might take an examination for the primary school leaving certificate, a status symbol and credential for immediate employment. Pupils between eleven and thirteen might take the entrance examination for secondary schools and, if over age fourteen, the entrance examination for the teacher training college.

In 1955 there were in the country 944 public elementary schools, ranging from one to twelve classrooms in size. In school year 1969/70 there were 3,063 public elementary schools with an enrollment of 199,111 pupils. In the late 1960s and early 1970s enrollment in elementary education was increasing at a rate of approximately 10 percent a year. To provide facilities for the rapidly increasing number of public school students, the ministries of national education and rural affairs had between 1955 and 1970 constructed and repaired over 3,500 elementary school classrooms, with assistance from the United States; of this total, about 2,500 classrooms were in rural areas.

The United States has also helped the Ministry of National Education to write, print, and distribute over 3 million textbooks in the Lao language and to publish eighty-four elementary texts. Despite the substantial steps taken to create and improve the facilities for elementary education, as of mid-1971 additional classrooms were needed for the later elementary level of education after the fourth grade.

General secondary education was offered in a seven-year program. As of mid-1971 there were twenty public secondary schools. Six of these offered a full seven years of secondary education. These six schools adhered closely to the French concept and system of education. The Ministry of National Education described this system of secondary education as established for a small elite group of Laotians with the mission of acting as liaison with the modern world. About 1,100 students annually completed seven-year secondary school training and a full thirteen years of education. All such students are offered scholarships for advanced study in France; most go, and few return.

In 1967 the Ministry of National Education, with assistance from the United States government and the University of Hawaii, established the first of three comprehensive high schools for grades seven through ten. In 1969 and 1970 two more comprehensive high schools were opened. In mid-1971 the three schools enrolled 760 students.

Courses in the comprehensive high schools were taught in the Lao language, and the curriculum was designed to meet the need for personnel in the beginning and middle-level management and technical positions in government and in business as well as to prepare students for advanced study in professional fields. The schools had programs for students in academic subjects, agriculture, the industrial arts, business and clerical skills, and home economics. The curriculum was being extended to include grades eleven through thirteen. A total of six such schools was planned. The programs in the other public secondary schools in the country will gradually be converted to follow the example of the comprehensive high schools.

In addition to the public secondary schools, there were six small private secondary schools situated near Vientiane. Total public secondary school enrollment had nearly doubled, from 3,300 in 1965/66 to 6,352 in 1969/70; however, only 10 percent of students completing primary schools could be admitted into the secondary and technical schools. After four years students who passed qualifying examinations for admission to the upper classes could enter a lycée that offered the final three years of the secondary program. Only one in 300 completed the secondary program.

The traditional curriculum was reformed in 1962 to emphasize the home, religion, community, and the relationship of the community to the nation. Lao was used in most elementary schools as the medium of instruction, although students also studied French. In secondary schools, however, except for the comprehensive high schools, the language of instruction was French. Lao occupied a position similar to that of a first foreign language in Western nations, and English was second; Pali, the language used in sacred Buddhist writing, occupied a place similar to Latin and Greek in Western schools. The ordinary secondary school curriculum was an expansion of that in primary schools and was not yet adapted fully to the cultural, social, and economic needs of present-day Laotians.

Teacher training for the upper elementary and secondary grades was provided at the Upper School of Pedagogy at Dong Dok near Vientiane. Over one-half of the 1,296 students at Dong Dok, mainly those in the Lao and English sections, were not required to take entrance examinations in French, indicating the extent to which the government was moving toward the use of Lao as a medium of instruction. In addition, there were eight teacher training schools, where examinations in French were not required. These institutions were all basically secondary schools, offering work that prepared teachers only for the beginning levels. Students from these schools had completed, at the most, six years of elementary education and from two to four years of professional training. The enrollment in teacher training schools had increased from 2.474 in 1968/69 to 3,036 in 1969/70.

The expansion of teacher training facilities had not kept pace with the demand for teachers. A major annual problem for the Royal Lao Government was the requirement for the inclusion in the national budget of payment of salaries of ever-increasing numbers of teachers. Annual inservice training courses had been attended by over 5,000 teachers since 1964, or over 80 percent of the number of elementary school teachers in the country. In addition, educational personnel had participated in 989 training programs. Most participants were sent for training courses in Thailand, including many short-term study programs for ten to twelve weeks during vacation periods, in various fields of specialization.

As instruction in the Lao language increased at the normal school and secondary levels, emphasis was shifting from the production of elementary textbooks to teacher-training and secondary texts. A total of fifteen teacher-training textbooks had been written and published. The Lao faculty of the comprehensive high school in

Vientiane was converting its classroom lessons into the first secondary school textbooks in the Lao language.

Higher education was limited to the Upper School of Pedagogy, the Royal School of Medicine, and the Royal Institute of Law and Administration (see ch. 14, National Defense and Internal Security). The three institutions were eventually to become the Sisavang Vong University, but as of 1971 those students wishing to pursue a career that required formal advanced training for full professional status had to study abroad. A government regulation required that students returning from abroad must serve for five years in the branch of government service for which they had been trained. In practice, however, the lack of qualified persons was so great that returned students entered the department with the greatest need for their services, without regard to their technical qualifications. Even where a returned student's technical qualifications were used appropriately, lack of facilities often reduced efficiency.

Technical training, whose development had lagged behind that of academic instruction, had improved in the late 1960s. It was highly valued in 1971. A study on incentives among employees of the United States economic aid mission showed that the desire for training ranked far above such items as high pay, higher prestige, and good social conditions. Most graduates of technical and vocational schools preferred to enter government employment.

Technical education was provided at three schools, at which 1,172 students were enrolled in 1969/70. The Vientiane and Savannakhet technical colleges were established as apprentice schools with French government assistance (see ch. 11, Character and Structure of the Economy). Both offered courses in general engineering, diesel motor mechanics, electricity, building and woodwork, tracing, metalwork, plumbing, and forging and welding. In addition, they had technical instructor training programs consisting of either two or three years of study in general courses, such as economics and commerce, plus a year of practical instruction. A third technical school, established with the aid of the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) was the Lao-German Technical College in Vientiane. It offered courses in motor and general mechanics, electricity, forging, and welding.

A technical craft school program was organized in 1965/66, when six craft schools with 150 students were started with United States financial and technical support. These schools were designed to provide up to two years of prevocational training for persons who have completed elementary school, and it was planned that they would be associated eventually with district elementary schools offering the full six-year course.

## Welfare

Western concepts of public welfare are recent innovations. Traditionally, the rulers of the country's principalities assumed little responsibility for public well-being beyond providing for external defense, general internal policing, and overall protection of religious institutions. In cases of serious natural disaster, taxes might be remitted, but no active measures were taken.

The basic social structure was founded on the tightly organized and cohesive village community (see ch. 4, Social Systems). Thousands of villages were individual, self-contained economic, political, and social units. Village self-sufficiency in public welfare matters was complete, insofar as the problems were recognized. Unemployment as a social problem did not exist in the lowland ethnic Lao subsistence-farming community, and the aged and otherwise handicapped were supported within the family. These conditions persist in large degree among the ethnic Lao, and there is still more pronounced isolation and self-dependence in community welfare among the ethnic minorities.

Traditionally, the country's rulers had neither cause nor inclination to intervene in matters of public welfare. Intermediate government centers, such as the district (*muong* ), were concerned solely with general administration and tax collection. The royal court found little reason for concern about things that usually took care of themselves. If natural disasters took place, they were the result of causes beyond the power of the prince to resist or remedy.

First the family and then the village looked after their own. If disaster struck one of the villagers, his family and neighbors helped him. Villages cooperated when the flood or typhoon brought destruction to the ricefields and dwellings, but no aid was expected from the government or from the local aristocracy. There is, thus, no tradition of public service or charity by private secular or religious associations.

Under French colonial rule, welfare activities by the government were limited largely to the establishment of public health facilities. The French also introduced the first sanitary regulations and the first social welfare legislation. In cases of large-scale natural disasters, government aid was provided to the affected areas. Some other welfare activities were also initiated by private secular and missionary organizations, which founded and operated orphanages and leper colonies.

### The Role of Government

Newly independent Laos created the national Ministry of Health out of the former French health services and subsequently formed the Ministry of Social Welfare. The new ministry assumed preventive responsibilities for the protection of the population in matters of health, sanitation, living conditions, and labor, whereas the Ministry of Health was concerned more with the care of those already ailing.

By 1971 cabinet responsibilities had been reassigned. Primary responsibilities devolved upon the Ministry of Public Works, the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Interior, and the Ministry of Social Welfare (see ch. 8, Political System and Values). Lack of money and of trained personnel, as well as the lack of a feeling of need on the part of the people, was impeding the government's work, but social welfare officers were being trained. Foreign aid was furnishing technical advice and funds.

In 1971 the government maintained a retirement and disability system with survivor's benefits for its civil employees, the armed forces, and the police. The system was administered by the National Pension Service in the Ministry of Finance. The pension service had two principal operating bureaus—one for civil employees, the other for the military. In general, full pensions were awarded at the age of fifty-five to employees with thirty years' service, but reduced pensions were given without regard to age upon request for retirement after thirty years of service. Full retirement benefits were calculated at 2 percent of the annual salary received during the last six-month period before retirement multiplied by the number of years of employment. The system was financed by government payments. Except for this pension system there was no governmental social security program.

### Other Insurance and Retirement Systems

A few establishments, principally foreign-owned banks and an oil company, paid retirement benefits to their employees. With the exception of a provident fund system, benefits were financed entirely by the employer, who also determined benefit formulas, eligibility, and other conditions. The retirement system most frequently used specified the payment of one month's wages or salary for each year of service. In calculating benefits, periods under one year were prorated.

Under the provident fund system, in which membership was optional, all employees except unskilled dayworkers contributed 5 percent of their monthly salaries into a fund that was matched by an additional 5-percent contribution from the employer. Money in the fund was used to purchase stock shares on the Swiss stock exchange, and profits were divided among the members of the fund. Accrued benefits were paid upon retirement, and members of the fund who resigned after five years' service were entitled to full benefits. Those with less than five years' service were permitted to draw only the original 5-percent contribution; the fund retained its contribution and the prorated profit, both of which were divided among the remaining members of the fund.

### Rural Development

Rural development programs constituted one of the main features of United States civil assistance to the country during the 1960s and early 1970s. Other foreign governments and multilateral organizations have contributed to rural programs but largely for major public works projects, such as bridges, roads, and airfields.

In 1971 the rural programs sponsored by the United States with the active cooperation of the government were aimed at contributing to the security of the countryside, establishing a mutually confident relationship between the government and the rural population, and assisting in raising rural living standards. The programs were applied to villages potentially suitable for shared facilities and interrelated economic and social development. Projects carried out in the villages included building or repairing schools and dispensaries, bringing in wells for water supply, constructing public markets, and building or improving roads, bridges, and irrigation systems.

Rural development activities stressed the improvement of physical facilities as a means of creating village attitudes and behavioral patterns conducive to economic and social advancement. Villagers, in accordance with the basic concept of rural self-help, shared with government and United States advisers the responsibility for choosing, planning, and implementing specific projects. Through this process it was intended that the villagers would learn to accept their government not simply as an institution that from time to time attempts to impose taxes but as one that can help meet their basic needs.

The government contributed land for structures erected in connection with the rural development program as well as the technical assistance of the various ministries concerned. Self-help by the villagers often included the provision of materials, such as brick and lumber, as well as labor.

During the 1960s and early 1970s the government provided full cooperation and as much budgetary help as was practicable in training Laotians for duties connected with economic and social development. The training was directed primarily at support of the rural development program. Considerable assistance was given by international organizations and foreign countries. Among the latter, the Colombo Plan states and France furnished significant help (see ch. 10, Foreign Relations; ch. 11, Character and Structure of the Economy).

## Patterns of Living and of Leisure

The traditional calendar is a complicated combination of the lunar and the solar with adjustment by insertion of various intercalary days, resulting in the loss of only one day every sixty-one years. The Gregorian calendar is used for dating the business of government and in all contact with the modern world, but it is little used or understood outside the capital and provincial towns. In more remote areas it is still a fairly common practice not to use a calendar at all but to consult astrologers with regard to holidays and to date the birth of a child not from a calendar date but from such natural events as the flooding of a river of the planting of a tree.

Some holidays are fixed by the Gregorian calendar, and some, by the traditional. The customary legal holidays, usually fifteen in number but frequently supplemented by special days of rest, are based on both calendar systems. The Gregorian New Year's Day is observed, but the variable, traditional New Year's Day is also celebrated toward the beginning of the monsoon rains and is the occasion of an elaborate three-day celebration, during the course of which everyone douses everyone else with water. At this time offerings are made to the spirit of the fields, and planting starts.

In addition to the regular holidays and the generally recognized weekly day of rest, importance is given to the cycle of rice cultivation. Symbolic significance is attached to the times of planting, transplanting, and harvesting of the grain. On these occasions semireligious ceremonies are called for, with animal sacrifices on behalf of the leading spirit of the ricefields.

In practice, the wet and dry seasons have more effect on the leisure and working patterns of the rural majority than do the generally recognized weekly days of rest and the national holidays. The beginning of the monsoon rains at the end of April or beginning of May means the busy planting time. Throughout the latter part of the growing season, until the rains terminate in October, people are free from intensive work. The dry season brings new activity corresponding to the harvest. During the December-January period of harvesting the rice, all members of rural families are so busy in the fields that school attendance suffers severely.

The amount of leisure time and how it is enjoyed vary somewhat between urban and rural people and among ethnic groups. In general, however, a high value is placed on leisure, and a Laotian is notably casual about time and appointments. The value placed on leisure is accompanied among the ethnic Lao by a love for organizing village feasts (*boun* ), which often extend late into the night. Feasts are about the only form of organized entertainment available in the rural communities.

Urban life is cast in a more formal mold and has more outlets for leisure, which is usually devoted by the convivial Laotian to mixing with his fellows, listening to storytellers, and participating in festivals. Ethnic Lao and minority groups alike fish in all areas along the Mekong River and its tributaries. During the dry season several families or even an entire village may organize a collective fishing expedition; during the rainy season flooded rice paddies may be seined by a large village group.

## Living Standards

Living standards are adequate by Southeast Asia measurements. By their own evaluation, the majority of the people are sufficiently fed, housed, and clothed. Exceptions are most likely to be found among the minority tribal peoples or among groups displaced by military action. Class differences exist, but the Western-educated and Western-oriented aristocracy is small. Although the living standards of this aristocracy in many ways diverge from the Lao norm, the basic tastes of the aristocracy in the matters of diet and dress are not far removed from those of villagers.

### Diet

The people eat moderately and are satisfied with simply prepared foods. In 1971 the caloric content of the daily diet of the average person was estimated at 1,900 calories. The staple food is crudely milled glutinous rice, which constitutes approximately 90 percent of the daily diet. Other mainstays are fish, fish sauce, eggs, chicken, pork, and only rarely a bit of beef, together with fruits and vegetables. Rice is served with chilis and a spicy paste made from fermented fish. A thick soup of meat or fish sometimes is served with rice. Variations in the supply of certain fruits and vegetables account for minor regional differences in diet; some variations exist also according to the economic status of the household, particularly with regard to beverages, bread, and canned goods.

Fresh milk and milk products are not used, but canned evaporated milk sometimes is added to coffee or tea by the more prosperous villagers. Milk is not a part of the diet of pregnant women or of children after they stop nursing. Meat is consumed sparingly, usually on special occasions. Although the Mekong River and its tributaries abound in fish, there is no commercial fishing. Consequently, fish tends to be scarce in the towns, and imported dried fish and tinned sardines are familiar items on the store shelves. The emphasis and overdependence on rice in the diet at the expense of other foods often result in malnutrition and diseases caused by diet deficiencies.

Corn, the second most important staple, particularly in hill tribe areas, is consumed much less than rice. Because of poor transportation and marketing facilities, aggravated in many areas by lack of internal security, the amount of rice that enters commercial markets is limited. Much of the rice required to meet the needs of the army and the larger urban areas is imported from Thailand, and the country is a substantial rice importer (see ch. 13, Trade and Transportation). The crudely milled product processed in villages by foot-and-hand pounders is more nourishing, but the polished rice from Thailand is preferred by the urban population. The countryman devotes over half of his working hours to growing enough rice to sustain his family. The average urban government clerk is estimated to spend about one-seventh of his salary on rice alone.

Even in times of rice crop failure there is rarely real hunger in the lowland regions, for there are a number of secondary crops to fall back on, some planted as a safety measure as well as a dietary supplement. Roots and fruits are also available in the forests along the rivers, near the main populated areas. For the mountain tribes, who lack the resources of the lowland dwellers, failure of the main crops of mountain rice and corn is a more serious problem. In the uplands, crop failure for any reason can mean near starvation.

### Clothing

Western clothing, particularly for work wear, is rapidly supplanting the traditional, colorful, and often costly costumes of the country's varied ethnic groups. Through much of the country, particularly in the southern provinces, work dress is likely to consist of old or nondescript garments. For men, Western shorts and slipover shirt or perhaps no shirt at all are worn. For women the customary garment is a skirt and a blouse, either of local fabrication or foreign made. In rural areas, preadolescent children are permitted to run about almost naked.

Except for the more prosperous and the urban dwellers most influenced by Western ways, people rarely wear shoes. Readymade clothing from Hong Kong and Southeast Asian manufacturing centers is becoming very popular, but most work and festival clothing is made in the home. Hand-looming of cloth is still customary, but imported cloth is increasing in popularity.

On festival occasions traditional attire continues to predominate, and only the most Westernized men wear Western clothes. Even these men are likely to revert to Laotian dress on special occasions, at least to the extent of wearing a costume giving the appearance of traditional baggy knee-length trousers below a Western coat and shirt. Most of the women consider that formal occasions demand the colorful Laotian skirt with its customary band of silver or gold thread embroidered around the bottom. In place of the sash that once served as a top to the costumes, however, the women now add embroidered short- or long-sleeved jackets and blouses of velvet or native silk.

The Laotian skirt is a special source of pride to the women, who usually own several of these costly and laboriously produced homewoven garments. However casual a woman may be about her attire around the home, she puts on a traditional skirt when going out in public. In the northern provinces the skirt may be worn even while housework is being done. Styles change slowly, and women's attire may be handed down from mother to daughter.

### Housing

For most of the population, housing is simple. Materials are supplied by the neighboring forest, and the labor is performed by the householder, his family, and possibly his neighbor. The typical Laotian house is rectangular and is built on long poles rising to and supporting the roof. The floorbeams rest on niches in the poles, six to eight feet above the ground. Floors are usually made of planks, but they may also be made of bamboo. The roofs are usually thatched.

The single floor has a veranda, which in the better homes is usually roofed and serves as a common room for the family. Meals are served and guests are received here. On the veranda the family cooks, bathes, and washes food and utensils (when this is not done in a river). Water for drinking and washing is stored in a large clay pot; waste water is poured off through cracks in the bamboo flooring, and garbage is disposed of in a similar manner to pigs, dogs, or chickens below. Inside the house a partition stretching its length divides the main area into two parts, the one nearer the veranda providing passageway to the sleeping cubicles into which the other side is divided. The various interior partitions may not reach to the eaves or ceiling and may be made of woven matting or curtains to allow a free flow of air. The passageway, if large enough, also serves as a common room. Only close relatives or intimate friends will be admitted beyond the common rooms. There are no heating facilities, even though blankets and coats may be needed in winter.

The interior of the typical house is somewhat dark. Natural sunlight is minimal, and there are many fertile breeding places for insects. At night the house is lighted by candles or lamps burning kerosine or locally made oil. Furnishings are simple. Mattresses or sleeping mats, cushions, stools, blankets, chests, floormats, and pots constitute the inventory.

The area beneath the house serves as a stable for farm animals and also provides storage room for agricultural tools, a loom, firewood, livestock, and sometimes a rice bin. Beneath the veranda may be found the dye vats and the shop for repair or manufacture of farming and household tools and equipment. The harvest may be stored in the attic or in a separate storehouse.

Houses of families with higher living standards are larger and customarily of wooden construction, but they usually retain the thatch roofing. Wealthy villagers have homes with wooden plank or tile floors, tile or corrugated iron roofs, and separate sheds for cooking and storage. The more elaborate wooden dwellings often lack sufficient ventilation because windows are too small; the simpler homes with woven bamboo walls provide a better circulation of air. In towns brick is becoming increasingly popular as a building material for the more substantial dwellings, and in the larger urban areas the more important officials might live in one- to two-story villas built in the French style. In these, the tendency is to use electricity, kerosine lamps, and Coleman lanterns instead of candles. Only the towns and urban areas are electrified, and production of electricity increased by 26 percent a year in the six principal cities between 1964 and 1967. Some more prosperous villages, however, have their own gasoline or diesel generators (see ch. 12, Economic Resources). Some of the wealthier Lao have ceiling fans in their main rooms, and air conditioners are being used increasingly.

There is usually no housing shortage in the countryside, where land is plentiful and dwellings can be cheaply constructed. In fact, houses are frequently abandoned. Some villages move to new locations after a few years; nearly all relocate within fifty years. Because of constant civil strife, many refugees have been displaced and have faced temporary housing shortages in their areas of relocation, but often they have been able to build new homes with government and United States assistance. In urban areas a housing shortage in 1960 was described as critical, and many of the existing dwellings were classified as substandard. A real estate building boom in the 1960s and early 1970s, however, reduced shortages in the Vientiane area. Evidence that construction in general had grown at a good pace is based on the increased production of timber, most of which is used in the domestic market.

### Consumption Patterns

The rural family and village are remarkably self-sufficient. Each family supplies most of its own needs, so that there are only a few specialized village artisans. The family produces its own food, makes its own tools, clothing, and fishing gear, and builds its own house, boat, and cart. It is dependent on outsiders for a few items, such as iron products from the local smithy, kerosine, soap, and salt. Few industrial manufactures are required by the people except in the towns, where foodstuffs also have to be imported (see ch. 12, Economic Resources; ch. 13, Trade and Transportation). Some foreign products, such as work clothes and tools, however, are becoming more common in the countryside, especially in farm villages of the south.

Tobacco and betel nut are used. The tobacco is usually grown by the farm villager himself or acquired locally. Opium is used as a painkiller, even for children, but there appears to be little addiction to the drug among the general population, although some hill tribes consume as well as produce it.

In general, the ethnic Lao rarely drink alcohol except for occasional ritual purposes. People of the hill tribes consume it in greater quantities. The Lao Theung use alcohol chiefly for ritual purposes, but sometimes the distinction between these rites and a drinking contest for the entire village and its guests is difficult to perceive.

Hoarding or hiding of wealth is not customary. If a Lao family enjoys increased prosperity, the increase is customarily invested in women's jewelry. This is also true of most of the ethnic minority groups. Many tribal women may be seen wearing a heavy burden in silver bracelets and sometimes gold collars, necklaces, and leg rings. Some of the Lao Theung men possess jewelry and similar finery as a means of storing and demonstrating their wealth.

As important to the family as its own living requirements are its contributions to the *wat* (see Glossary), the monks, and the frequent festivals that revolve around the Buddhist-oriented life (see ch. 6, Religion). Every family contributes according to its abilities. A family's usual daily food contribution to the monks is about two bowls of rice and corresponding quantities of other available food. Additional gifts are made on special occasions. Preparations for festivals at the *wat* may be both costly and time consuming, occupying the whole village population for days in advance.

## Refugees

The refugee problem goes back to the 1953-54 period when Viet Minh units, accompanied by Pathet Lao, invaded Laos, forcing the movement of people who opposed the invaders. The first major refugee movement occurred in 1954 after the signing of the Geneva agreements (see ch. 3, Historical Setting; ch. 10, Foreign Relations). At this time refugees began moving southward from the northernmost provinces of Laos: Phong Saly, Houa Khong, northern Luang Prabang, and Houa Phan (Sam Neua). Most of the refugees were Meo, inhabitants of the mountains of northern Laos, who practice a slash-and-burn agriculture and who find it difficult to live at altitudes lower than 3,500 feet (see ch. 4, Social Systems).

The greater portion of these refugees moved into central Xieng Khouang Province and to the central and southern areas of Luang Prabang Province.

The refugees then moving southward had to depend for the most part on meager help from relatives along the way and Lao villagers in the areas to which they had fled. In mid-1956 a small resettlement program for Meo refugees was established in Xieng Khouang province; United States government-sponsored relief was provided through private humanitarian organizations. Teams airdropped blankets, cloth, and cooking utensils. By the end of 1958 approximately 27,000 Meo and members of other mountain tribes had been helped in this way. In 1959 the United States economic aid mission in Vientiane established a refugee office to assist the government in providing relief for approximately 40,000 refugees who had fled their homes by this time. This began a series of cooperative programs between the two governments involving organization, development of procedures, and material assistance to displaced people.

In 1960, as a result of the widespread hostilities that followed the Kong Le coup d'etat, the number of refugees increased to 90,000. There were large refugee movements in 1961 and 1962 as a consequence of the occupation of the Plain of Jars and certain areas of Houa Phan Province by neutralist-Pathet Lao forces. About 70,000 persons were displaced to hill areas south of the Plain of Jars and west and southwest of the city of Samneua.

With the signing of the 1962 Geneva agreements, a cease-fire was arranged, and the Royal Lao Government found itself host to approximately 125,000 people who had moved to areas under its control. By this time, organization and procedures had been developed to provide relief and support refugees. The support provided consisted of rice, salt, blankets, mosquito nets, cooking utensils, hand tools, vegetable seeds, and medicines. The government lacked the resources to finance its overall refugee program, which required, in addition to relief supplies, expensive air transport to get supplies to the bulk of the tribal refugees, who were located in isolated places surrounded by mountainous and difficult terrain, almost always inaccessible by land or river transportation. Where surface transportation was physically possible, there was a lack of security for such transportation. The United States therefore financed the contracts for the air transport services required to deliver relief supplies to the many isolated refugee settlements.

It was expected in 1962 that, as a result of the political settlement that had been reached, the refugee problem would be reduced as refugees were resettled and peaceful conditions were restored.

Subsequently, however, continued military attacks by the Pathet Lao (named the Lao People's Liberation Army in October 1965), attempts at subversion, demands for laborers, and other pressures forced people who were opposed to the rival communist-controlled regime of the NLHS or who merely wanted to get away from NLHS control to abandon their homes and seek security and peace elsewhere.

As of 1964 the bulk of the refugees were hill tribesmen because most of the hostilities continued to take place in the mountainous area of the country inhabited by tribal groups. There were also, however, several thousand ethnic Lao refugees who had been forced to leave their homes because of Pathet Lao attacks or pressures. In this group were included some 5,000 dependents of General Kong Le's neutralist troops and others who were forced to flee from the Plain of Jars area in May 1964 after the Pathet Lao attacks, which forced the neutralists off almost all of the plain (see ch. 3, Historical Setting).

The number of refugees receiving assistance remained approximately static from 1964 to 1968 at about 125,000 persons per year. In late 1967 and in 1968 the number of North Vietnamese Army units in Laos began to be increased, and subsequently military action in Laos was intensified (see ch. 14, National Defense and Internal Security). By October 1968 the total number of refugees stood at about 128,000, of whom the largest number were the Meo, whose men formed the forward defense screen in northeast Laos and whose families had to be cared for by the Royal Lao Government and supported by the United States.

In the autumn of 1968 the North Vietnamese began a campaign to press all the local population out of eastern Houa Phan Province and northern Xieng Khouang Province. By the spring of 1969 they had succeeded in eliminating most of the Meo outposts north and east of the Plain of Jars and began reinforcing their positions in the Plain of Jars.

To turn the cutting edge of the North Vietnamese forces, the commander of Laotian Military Region II launched attacks in the late spring of 1969 against the logistics bases and the marshaling grounds of the North Vietnamese forces on the Plain of Jars. By the autumn of 1969 his units had swept over the plain. In the fourth quarter of 1969 the North Vietnamese resumed their attacks throughout Laos, including assaults on southern and central Laos, where they laid siege to the provincial capitals of Attopeu and Saravane.

Increasing military pressure in the first two weeks of January 1970 necessitated air evacuation of over 8,000 refugees from the southwestern portion of Houa Phan Province to the area of the

Nam Ngum River Dam, under construction in Vientiane Province. The second evacuation occurred between February 4 and February 10, a few days before the Lao People's Liberation Army and North Vietnamese forces attacked and reoccupied the Plain of Jars: the imminence of hostile offensive action required the air evacuation of about 15,000 refugees from the plain to an area in Vientiane Province between Ban Keum and Vientiane city. After the fall of Sam Thong in Xieng Khouang Province in March 1970, the number of this group of refugees increased to over 24,000 people. The military events of 1969 and 1970, which included the liberation and eventual evacuation of the Plain of Jars, reached a peak with the loss of Sam Thong in March 1970 and culminated with the loss of Attopeu during April 1970 and of Saravane during June 1970.

The number of refugees increased rapidly during this period of unusually heavy offensives by North Vietnamese forces and their Lao People's Liberation Army auxiliaries and counteroffensives by Royal Lao Government forces. As of July 1, 1970, there were nearly 255,000 refugees, including some 95,000 paramilitary personnel and their dependents. At least 60 percent of these refugees, or nearly all except the paramilitary group, had been generated after February 1, 1970. Among them were the estimated 90,000 refugees from the Plain of Jars. Many new refugees were generated during July 1970, especially from the southern provincial towns of Attopeu and Saravane. Some 13,000 refugees had fled from Saravane alone, mostly southwest toward Pakse.

By the end of October 1970 approximately 276,000 refugees required assistance. In the 1970/71 dry season North Vietnamese military pressures began again. In 1971 their offensive was directed not only against Royal Lao Government positions south of the Plain of Jars but also against the royal capital of Luang Prabang in the north. The North Vietnamese again in 1971 augmented their forces in Laos. Two divisions were fighting in northern Laos in the spring of 1971. The North Vietnamese kept a steady artillery and rocket pressure on the forward outposts and ridge lines held by the Meo defenders. These actions again caused the westward movement of civilian populations and created new refugee communities. The number of refugees, after remaining relatively stable at about 280,000 through February 1971, rose by 10,000 in March 1971, by 18,000 in April 1971, and by 7,000 in May 1971, to reach a total of some 315,000 as of June 1, 1971—that is, roughly 10 percent of the estimated population of Laos.

Through mid-1971 the United States government, through the medium of the economic aid mission in Vientiane, had financed and carried out almost all the efforts undertaken to ameliorate the plight of the refugees. For the fiscal year ending June 30, 1971, the cost of this effort was estimated at US $17 million. In the twelve years of this operation elaborate procedures and criteria had been developed to govern the provision of assistance to refugees.

The priorities of the United States economic aid mission in 1971 for refugee relief were: first, assistance on an emergency basis to refugee movements created by or in anticipation of military action, providing help in evacuating people if required, and emergency medical care and food supply; second, assistance in relocating refugees, providing transportation to relocation sites, food, water supply, shelter materials, and medical care; and third, assistance in providing basic facilities (schools, dispensaries, roads, and wells) to bring refugee groups to an economic and social level equal to that of the nonrefugees in the area.

In 1971 refugees were given food, rehabilitation support, or both, as needed. The food might be rice; a combination of rice and such United States surplus agricultural commodities as bulgar wheat, cornmeal, and wheat noodles; or surplus commodities only. A protein supplement was sometimes given. Rehabilitation assistance included shelter (plastic sheeting or other roofing), medical assistance (medicines and access to local medical technicians or, when possible, evacuation of serious cases to a hospital), adequate water supply, and educational assistance in reestablishing schools for children.

Some refugees were fully or partially dependent on outside help for both food and rehabilitation assistance. Others received rehabilitation assistance only. The nature of assistance varied from region to region depending on security conditions and on feasibility.

Refugees were placed in three rehabilitation categories. The first category was composed of those who had been forced to leave their homes and villages in such haste that they had neither food, household goods, nor the means to acquire either when they arrived in that part of Laos controlled by the Royal Lao Government. These refugees received full support. The second category comprised those refugees who had managed to become partially self-sufficient, usually as the result of help in relocating on land that they now had under cultivation. Also in this category were those refugees who, when they left their homes, had sufficient time to gather their belongings—tools, seeds, animals, and household goods. The location of their new homes, the time of year that they arrived (because planting and harvesting are bound to the seasons), and the quality of village leadership determined the degree of self-sufficiency achieved and the time needed to achieve it.

The third category was composed of refugees who wished to remain in that part of Laos controlled by the Royal Lao Government or who felt that there was little hope of returning to their native villages. In 1966 the Royal Lao Government developed a plan of assistance for those refugees under which land was to be distributed to them. In the initial phase of their relocation, authorities emphasized the goal of self-sufficiency for the refugees, which to the Lao translates as "enough to eat and enough to use."

On the Vientiane Plain there were in 1971, on a stretch of land measuring about 4,200 square miles, seventeen refugee villages holding about 24,000 people evacuated from the Plain of Jars and from Sam Thong in February and March 1970. On land provided by the Royal Lao Government the people lived in houses that they had built, planted rice and vegetable gardens, and harvested their crops; some 4,000 children of the villages were in school. During the second year of their relocation, additional land was cleared, ricefields were prepared, roads were built, and houses and schools were improved. Once permanent schools, dispensaries, roads, and wells had been built and agricultural production to a level equal to that of surrounding villages had been assured, relocated persons were no longer considered refugees.

In 1971 the most promising areas for integration of refugees into the country's economy were relocation sites near commercial centers, such as the villages on the Vientiane Plain and those near Pakse and Savannakhet and in Sayaboury Province. In 1971 about 46,000 people had been relocated in these areas. Authorities hoped to make each refugee ultimately a contributor to the country's economy by providing the groups with seeds and tools for food production and by introducing handicrafts, such as textile weaving, or small commercial undertakings, such as silk production or cash crops with a market value.

In 1971 there remained approximately 100,000 Meo and members of other hill tribes who were in temporary relocation sites, where they depended on rice dropped from aircraft for their food supply. Their traditional homes in the mountains around and north of the Plain of Jars were denied them by the presence of the Lao People's Liberation Army as well as North Vietnamese army units (see ch. 14, National Defense and Internal Security). For almost eighteen years these people had been caught in the offensives and counteroffensives of the conflict that has divided the country. They had stripped the mountains of game, their livestock had disappeared, and they could no longer practice their traditional pattern of slash-and-burn agriculture, which depended on their access to the mountains and their freedom to move from hillside to hillside every two or three years. In many cases the rice drop was their only source of food. In 1971, depending on weather or on the presence of the Lao People's Liberation Army or other enemy forces, aircraft continued to drop approximately fifty tons of rice each day at 120 drop sites.

## CONDITIONS IN THE LAO PATRIOTIC FRONT-CONTROLLED AREA

Little solid information was available in the first half of 1971 on medical and educational conditions and standards of living in general in the areas of the country controlled by the Lao Patriotic Front (Neo Lao Hak Sat—NLHS). The fragmentary information available consisted of surveys of the reports of refugees, monitored radio broadcasts, one study by a United Nations observer, and meager press reporting. These statements had to be evaluated against what was known of the relative freedom, or lack of it, of reporting from the NLHS zone. "Unfriendly" newsmen were unwelcome in the NLHS zone of the country in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Foreigners who did gain access were known to be well disposed toward the NLHS cause and were always carefully guarded. The few foreign residents in NLHS territory were Communists. The few other foreigners who came as visitors were given little opportunity to assess the extent of the North Vietnamese presence in Laos. An evaluation could be attempted, however, based on the available information and what was known of the policies and practices of Asian communist countries, such as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea), the People's Republic of China, and North Vietnam.

### Health

The pattern of supervision by North Vietnamese cadres of the field of health in the NLHS-controlled area conformed to that generally prevailing throughout the area: the direction of public health was in the hands of the North Vietnamese cadres, although their Lao counterparts were nominally in charge. Hard information was scarce, but radio broadcasts and interviews of refugees did allow perception of an emerging picture.

One radio broadcast in July 1970 claimed that in 1969 and 1970 medical cadres and "fighters" of Xieng Khouang Province, in addition to serving the frontline soldiers by transporting supplies, established a provincial hospital, two mobile medical units, and five mobile surgical units to provide medical services to soldiers fighting on the frontline. The broadcast further asserted that Xieng Khouang medical cadres and fighters also provided a medical training course attended by thirty-seven trainees. After finishing their training course, these medical trainees were sent to serve soldiers in various regiments and companies on the frontlines. Another broadcast, in April 1970, claimed that forty-two hospitals, clinics, or dispensaries had been built in the "free zone of lower Laos."

Analyses of refugee interviews in 1969 revealed that in the areas of Xieng Khouang Province controlled by the NLHS, medical facilities were organized at the province, district, and canton levels. No village-level program existed in 1969, although one was reported planned. Canton dispensaries were usually stocked with little more than a few pills and were able to treat only simple maladies. The canton dispensary at Xieng Khouang city was staffed by a single nurse, who rarely visited sick persons and who usually referred patients to the district dispensary at Na Kwa, northwest of Xieng Khouang city. At the district level a greater variety of medicine was available, but again the staff of three persons usually referred patients needing more intensive treatment to the provincial infirmary at Tham Hok. The provincial infirmary was directed by a surgeon and was able to treat up to fifty inpatients, who slept in shelters outside the entrance to the cave in which the provincial infirmary was located.

According to the refugees questioned, nurses at the district infirmary attended in 1964 a six-month training course at Khang Khay in the Plain of Jars. The program had been operated by a military officer who had received his medical training in Cambodia. The canton nurse had studied for three months at Khang Khay. In March 1969 a new training program for village-level medical technicians and nurses was begun; twenty-five students, mostly girls, had attended a twenty-five-day course at Tham Hok taught by four Lao and two North Vietnamese instructors.

A few able Laotian students were regularly chosen to study medicine in North Vietnam. Medical supplies, largely of Soviet and Mainland Chinese manufacture, were provided by North Vietnam to the medical installations in the NLHS areas of Laos. The North Vietnamese had been instrumental in establishing a simple medical training school in Houa Phan Province, for which they furnished the key training staff. Other North Vietnamese medical personnel not only cared for the North Vietnamese troops and advisers in the NLHS areas and treated some Laotians but also taught Laotian nurses. An NLHS spokesman claimed in 1970 that there were twenty doctors and 1,700 hospital beds in the "liberated zones" but gave no details of their origin and administration.

One North Vietnamese medical technician who had served in Houa Khong Province (called Luong Nam Tha Province by the NLHS) had helped in 1967 to establish a course that would graduate twenty-five Laotian nurses every three months and a more advanced program designed to produce forty nurses in six months. In the usual pattern, the teaching staff for these training programs was Lao, but the material and methods were prepared by the North Vietnamese. At the more advanced medical installations at Muong Sai in Luang Prabang Province, the instructors were all North

Vietnamese; they taught in Lao, using Vietnamese only for technical terms.

The North Vietnamese Army had established a separate medical system to serve their own personnel and to provide assistance to the Lao People's Liberation Army (see ch. 14, National Defense and Internal Security). Five rudimentary hospitals—three North Vietnamese and two Laotian—were established in Houa Khong Province during 1966 and 1967.

The refugees who were interviewed stated that the Lao People's Liberation Army soldiers appeared to receive much better medical care than their civilian counterparts. Each of the four battalions stationed in Xieng Khouang Province had assigned to it a surgical unit consisting of a surgeon and six assistants, two battalion-level medical corpsmen, a medical corpsman for each company, and company-level hygiene advisers who supervised food preparation, latrine construction, and camp cleanliness. Each of the surgeons had studied in Hanoi for six years. The hospital at Tham Kap, northwest of Xieng Khouang city, was the main military hospital for the province and admitted only soldiers or high-ranking government officials. This hospital, which could accommodate about 100 inpatients, was equipped with a laboratory and a surgical unit. It was also the main medical warehouse for the province and supplied military units in the field with prepackaged first aid kits and surgical supplies. A smaller medical warehouse at Khang Khay prepared indigenous remedies, which were distributed to the troops and civilians along with manufactured pharmaceutical preparations.

### Education

Radio broadcasts from the NLHS-controlled area in the summer of 1970 claimed that in the 1969/70 school year the number of students had increased to over 69,000, including 1,129 secondary students and eighty-eight college students. The total number of students was claimed to be twice the figure for the 1966/67 school year. Twenty-one more secondary schools had been built during the 1969/70 school year, it was claimed, and the number of teachers had risen to 3,800, or an average of from three to seven teachers for each canton.

The broadcasts further claimed that illiteracy had been eliminated in a total of 650 villages and thirty-eight cantons. During the 1969/70 school year forty-five "cultural training" schools had been built for district—and provincial-level cadres, and these schools were attended by 1,472 cadres.

In the 1970/71 school year there did not appear to have been much of an increase in attendance. The enrollment for that year was again claimed to be double the 1966/ 67 figure. The number of villages declared to be free of illiteracy was given as 750. It was also claimed that twenty-four "complementary education" schools had been built for young people of various ethnic groups; and forty-four others, for office employees and cadres in rural areas.

Analyses of refugee interviews in 1970 and 1971 reported that in the NLHS-controlled areas of Xieng Khouang Province the first three grades of elementary education were taught in primary schools found in virtually every village, whereas the fourth grade was taught in the provincial school near Xieng Khouang city. Students entered the first grade at age six or seven; they studied four hours a day. Because of the bombing the schools were held in the early morning hours and finished at 9:00 A.M. Primary school textbooks were distributed free, but notebooks and pencils had to be purchased. Graduation from the fourth grade usually took more than four years but qualified a student for enrollment in the secondary school.

There were four secondary schools in the province. Students usually boarded at the secondary schools during the two-year course and returned home to get rice whenever their supply was exhausted. In 1969 there were 436 students enrolled at the secondary level, about evenly divided among the four locations. The pupil-teacher ratio varied between ten and thirty students per teacher.

Beyond the secondary schools the students entered the two-year provincial college, established in 1968. In 1969 there were only nineteen students at the college. Graduates of this institution attend Sithone Kommadam School (named after the vice chairman of the NLHS) in Sontay, west of Hanoi. An estimated 15,000 Laotian students from all over the NLHS-controlled area have been enrolled since the Sithone Kommadam School was established.

There were separate schools in Xieng Khouang city for the small Chinese and Vietnamese populations; the Chinese school had teachers attached to the cultural mission of the People's Republic of China at the NLHS provincial capital of Khang Khay in Xieng Khouang Province (see ch. 10, Foreign Relations).

Until late 1968 the only prerequisite for teaching the first three grades was a knowledge of written Lao, but subsequently a four-month training course was established. Teachers at the fourth-grade level were required to attend a one-year course near Xieng Khouang city. Teachers in the secondary schools had to be graduates of a training course of several years given at Samneua city. Little was known about the backgrounds of the college teachers—in 1969 five Lao and five North Vietnamese. The teacher training courses included instruction in carpentry, blacksmithing, and agriculture as well as lengthy lessons in politics and the policies of the NLHS administration.

Most of the instruction given teachers was inservice training. Primary school teachers spend each Saturday at meetings where they were encouraged to guide their students from the "old way" toward the "new way." In addition to these weekly sessions, all of the secondary school teachers and some of the primary school teachers attended annual one-month training sessions during the two-month vacation period.

Several of the refugees who had been schoolteachers described the role played by the North Vietnamese cadres in their annual inservice training courses. The teachers who had attended the thirty-day sessions in 1966, 1967, and 1968 said that the training was conducted by the canton education chief and another Lao education functionary from the provincial staff but that throughout the session these two met constantly with the North Vietnamese education adviser for the canton. The teachers said that the North Vietnamese adviser worked closely with his Lao counterpart throughout the year but that his presence was particularly obvious during the annual training course, although he did not do any of the actual teaching. Fifteen days of the sessions were devoted to "politics"; the teachers thought that the North Vietnamese adviser was particularly anxious to ensure that nothing was left out of the large body of Marxist-Leninist dogma that was presented as part of the course.

Textbooks emphasized hygiene and better agricultural practices, as well as self-denial and communal endeavor. Many allegorical stories, akin to Aesop's fables, were used to teach right and wrong. Patriotic songs told of capturing enemy arms. Heroic stories told of the successes of the Lao People's Liberation Army infantry and antiaircraft units. The arithmetic texts included exercises involving taxation, rice donations to the army, equivalent Vietnamese units of weight, numbers of people at political rallies, production records set by various districts, lengths of road construction, loads carried by porters, and other examples appropriate to the new way of life. Only Arabic numerals were used.

All textbooks beyond the third grade were direct translations of North Vietnamese schoolbooks. The lessons were mineographed, and poor copies were checked with the North Vietnamese originals to ensure their accuracy. They had been in use since the 1966/67 school year, when they replaced the old Royal Lao Government materials. Textbooks in Meo orthography were also used after 1967, but Meo students were required to learn Lao first. The Meo script was an altered Lao script, easily learned once the Meo students knew Lao.

The North Vietnamese influence on the educational system was pervasive. The North Vietnamese interpretation of Marxism-Leninism had been added to the curriculum, beginning with the theory of the class struggle and continuing through "American imperialism." Since 1965 the Vietnamese language had been taught for one hour daily.

The only formally organized adult education program was for illiterate NLHS government officials. Because minor officials were chosen on the basis of their contributions to the state and their reliability, low-level administrators commonly had little knowledge of written Lao. The greater part of the literacy campaign, however, consisted of a 1966 requirement that all teachers instruct five adults per year to read and write and that all literate people teach two adults per year.

The educational system had two primary functions: first, to change the society from the bottom upwards by introducing new values and patterns of thought and, second, to provide a manpower base to meet the requirements of the state. The basic philosophy concerning the first function was that students were expected to grow up in a society radically different from that of their parents and that the school system had become a major instrument of social transformation. The perspective of the schools was one that on many issues was likely to be repugnant to the older generation, such as treating in a matter-of-fact way the waste of resources on funeral rites and describing as normal rather radical programs, such as the self-criticism sessions (see ch. 4, Social Systems). Beginning at the secondary school level, the pupils were largely isolated from their parents and became official wards of the state; unless they returned to their villages as teachers or medical technicians, they were largely removed from the influence of the older generation.

The second function of the educational system was that of meeting certain manpower requirements of the state. Quotas for soldiers, medical technicians, nurses, agricultural agents, and other state employees were sent from the provincial government to the school system, which helped to select the most promising students for these occupations. Increased requirements for soldiers in particular and a general emphasis on more diligent study had led to the abolition of two grades in the system; a fifth primary grade was eliminated in 1967, and a third year of the secondary school was abolished in 1968. The students were in 1969 expected to learn more and to learn it faster in order to serve their country sooner. There seemed to be no clear pattern as to the number of times a student was allowed to repeat a grade, but his chances of being drafted increased rapidly as his examination grades worsened.

In the NLHS areas the phrase "to go to study" had become a euphemism for conscription because of the frequent drafts of students. The same phrase was used by the NLHS to indicate self-criticism sessions and had acquired an ugly connotation among the older Lao. Most of those who "went to study" outside the province or to North Vietnam were rarely heard from again; they were usually attached to military units in other areas or, if they graduated from the advanced schools, they were sent to work in Sam Neua where the "model state" was being built.

## Living Standards

Living standards under the NLHS administration were very difficult and austere in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Interviews with refugees indicated that the villagers found the most onerous aspect of NLHS rule the coolie labor system of human convoys and work crews. Another of the more unpopular facets of life in the NLHS-controlled area was the separation of children from their parents, either through the draft or through the school system, which ensured that children were as isolated as possible from the influences of the older generation. The taxation of rice had added to the villagers' discomforts by removing the reserves that had traditionally helped them to survive during lean years and had enabled them to support relatives and friends in the customary system of the society. The combination of the draft, taxation of rice, and the portage system (the compulsory human transport of rice from parts of the NLHS-controlled area to other parts, which often meant that villagers were on convoys for two months of the year) required the villagers to grow more just to stay on an even standard of living.

### Food and Housing

One of the most consistent themes in the rhetoric directed at the population of the NLHS-controlled area has been the need for greater production. Directives to junior officials have dwelt at length on the need to put unused land into production of rice, to exceed last year's output, to increase the planting of secondary crops, and to press for greater efforts on the part of the villagers. An official directive that states that one person shall do the work of five referred not only to the shortages of labor created by the draft and by the portage system but also to production in general.

Minimum planting requirements were established for production of rice, but they were usually exceeded as a matter of course. Civilians were required to plant at least 8.8 pounds per person in seedbeds; village militia were required to plant 4.4 pounds per person. Most of the refugees from the NLHS-controlled area, when interviewed on the subject, reported planting from over 100 pounds to nearly 2,000 pounds per year. Rice, or paddy, land was divided into three grades, which were required to produce the following quantities of rice per pound of seed: grade one, 110 pounds; grade two, sixty-six pounds; and grade three, thirty-three pounds. Additional crops that had gained importance as the taxes on rice increased included sweet potatoes, potatoes, cassava, corn, beans, eggplant, tomatoes, and a variety of other vegetables.

The use of natural fertilizers on riceland was strongly encouraged, and the North Vietnamese irrigation advisers attempted to encourage the use of human excrement, or night soil, on vegetable gardens. Locally conscripted agricultural and veterinary agents were assigned to groups of villages. Beginning in 1967 increased emphasis was placed on irrigation, as groups of North Vietnamese began to direct construction of canals and dams. A few experiments were made with double-cropping but not on a regular basis. Much of the impressed labor was used on irrigation works, and the presence of a relatively large group of North Vietnamese advisers indicates the priority given to the irrigation program by the administration of the NLHS-controlled area.

As of the late 1960s riceland was still privately owned for the most part, and traditional inheritance procedures were followed unless the owner escaped to the Royal Lao Government area, in which case the land became public property. Most of the public riceland being used in the late 1960s had been acquired from land abandoned in 1961 by persons who had transferred to the royal government-controlled area, although some land was new land that had been recently irrigated. Government officials and schoolchildren at the secondary and higher education level worked the public riceland; villagers were not required to spend time on the public land.

Water buffalo and cattle were almost entirely privately owned, but strict regulations regarding their sale or slaughter had been in force for several years. Villagers needed written permission from the district administration to slaughter an animal for a marriage ceremony. The sale of these livestock was permitted only at fixed prices and was usually limited to the cooperative store. Swine were not as closely controlled and could be sold or traded freely among the villagers. Chickens and ducks could be slaughtered or sold at the owner's discretion; careful records of each family's flock were kept at the canton office.

The cooperatives were the commercial centers of the provinces under the control of the NLHS; they were expanded in the 1960s, so that several cantons had outlets of their own. The stores were not cooperatives in the sense that shares were owned by members; they functioned instead as purchasing agencies and retail outlets.

Most of the goods sold were from North Vietnam or the People's Republic of China and included common household items. Most of the merchandise was rationed, and it was common to find many items unavailable. Priority was given to the military cooperative, a separate organization.

The market at Xieng Khouang city was open daily for several hours in the early morning; it frequently closed at dawn, however, to avoid the possibility of air strikes. Travel documents were not required to go to the market. Most of the items sold were produced nearby, and almost all the Chinese and North Vietnamese merchants had been put out of business or severely restricted in their trading activities. The prices for chickens, ducks, swine, vegetables, and other items could be freely negotiated; the prices were comparable to those in the Royal Lao Government-controlled area.

After the introduction of formal taxation of rice in 1965 the effective rate rose steadily. The rates varied from one locality to another. In more secure communities, the people were subject to higher taxes. The differences reflect the extent of NLHS administrative and military control and illustrate an NLHS policy of setting examples in one locality to be followed later in another.

Each member of a family was allowed 220 pounds of paddy (unmilled) rice tax free. The remainder was taxed at the rate of 15 percent; this "state rice" was put in a public bin in each village. This primary tax was labeled "rice to help the state."

The secondary tax on rice was called "trading rice." Approximately 10 percent of the rice remaining after the "state rice" tax had been paid was bought by the cooperative.

The third tax on rice, in effect since 1967, was labeled "rice from the heart." This tax was a voluntary contribution solicited from villagers at the time the other taxes were collected. At the time of collection, each villager was "persuaded" to exceed his neighbor's or his own contribution of the preceding year. Further contributions were solicited throughout the year as the need arose.

The NLHS administrators had some difficulty in collecting the rice taxes. Villagers falsified so consistently about total harvests that officials and representatives from the provincial and district governments and North Vietnamese cadres were forced to watch harvesting and thrashing to prevent cheating. Each year a surtax on rice was levied, with varying degrees of success, to compensate for the rice that was hidden the previous year.

The public rice was distributed to Lao People's Liberation Army and NLHS civil servants above the canton level; the North Vietnamese Army brought in its own rice. The officials entitled to public rice rarely received their full quota, as the Lao People's Liberation Army had first priority.

Housing in the NLHS-controlled area had originally been little, if any, different from that in the rest of the country. According to interviews with persons who had fled or been evacuated from the Plain of Jars in 1970, however, bombing of the NLHS-controlled area had forced changes in the housing practices among the population in the NLHS zone. During 1967 and 1968 most of those persons interviewed had moved into the forest in the vicinity of their villages. They constructed small bamboo shelters near caves, trenches dug into hills, or holes camouflaged by sticks and leaves. They threw corrugated iron over the trenches, covered them with dirt, and topped them with branches.

Many of the villagers had lived in such places for months. Some stated that they stayed in shelters, running for a trench, cave, or hole at the sound of aircraft. It took four people about a month to dig a trench or hole suitable for a family. Most households reported that they dug several such hideaways at various times during the course of the bombing.

The villagers left their retreats regularly to raise food, care for livestock, pound rice, and perform other such essential tasks. Fear of being seen from the air, however, restricted farming activities. By 1969 these villagers had abandoned most of their ricefields, turning to cultivation of manioc in the forest and subsistence plots of rice. They worked in their fields mainly at night, when there was sufficient moonlight, or with the aid of small kerosine lamps.

### Patterns of Work and Leisure

The refugees reported that the single most unpopular aspect of life under the NLHS was the portage system. Almost no one was exempt from numerous short trips of up to a week's duration, and everyone with enough strength was required to make one long trip a year. The long trip usually meant thirty cumulative days of actual carrying, not counting days for rest or the return trip.

Men were required to carry thirty-three pounds of cargo plus their own rice, but average loads appeared to be about thirty-three pounds, including the rice. Women averaged about twenty-two pounds including rice, although they were supposed to carry twenty-two pounds of cargo alone. On long trips rice was provided by the NLHS administration at the rate of slightly over two pounds per day, and each porter also received one pound of canned meat per week. Short trips were organized whenever the need arose and had become more frequent as the NLHS administration had become more effective. In 1969 there was an average of one or two trips a month. Women were less frequently assigned to the long trips, but everyone else, including the local Chinese and North Vietnamese residents, was subject to being drafted for portage. Women who were not assigned to specific portage groups were responsible for the children of women who went on the trips. The refugees reported that they were sometimes able to puncture holes in the sacks of rice to lighten the load and that they were sometimes able to discard part of their cargo in the forests without being caught.

Civilians were also assigned to road construction and maintenance groups. The villagers were also conscripted to build major bunkers and air raid shelters, and many of the antiaircraft gun emplacements around Xieng Khouang city were built by civilian labor crews. Impressed labor was also used on earth dams and irrigation works, which had become priority projects in the late 1960s. Requirements for labor were passed down through administrative and governmental channels to the villages, where their fulfillment was supervised by the canton and village officials.

# CHAPTER 6
# RELIGION

Theravada Buddhism (one of the two major forms of Buddhism) is the official faith of the Kingdom of Laos. The organization of the religious hierarchy closely parallels that of the government and is tied to it by law. Most of the Lao, who comprise roughly half the population, and a small number of non-Lao think of themselves as Buddhists, accept Theravada Buddhist ideas as part of their beliefs, engage in rituals sanctioned by Buddhist doctrine, and support the bonzes—Buddhist monks and novices—in their communities. Until after World War II most education was in the hands of the bonzes, and in 1971 some of it still was (see ch. 5, Health, Education, and Welfare).

Through the centuries, however, the cult of the *phi* (spirits) has existed side by side with Buddhism. Together, Buddhism and *phi* worship constitute the total system of belief and practice characteristic of most Lao. Buddhism stresses the ultimate goal of nirvana—a state in which desire and individual consciousness are extinguished and one in which suffering, the result of desire, is absent. In Theravada Buddhism the ordinary believer, in contrast to the monk, is thought to be quite remote from this and can hope only for a rebirth (reincarnation), which may bring him closer to the possibility of nirvana and will improve his earthly status. In order to deal with the difficulties and desires of daily life, however, the Lao Buddhist placates the *phi* when he thinks of them as vengeful or he seeks their favor when he is about to embark on a new venture. He looks to them to grant a good harvest, and he performs the rituals necessary to propitiate them. *Phi* worship, then, is meant to deal with the problems of this world; Buddhism is oriented to leaving the world.

Although some tribal Tai (particularly the Lu), a few mountain Mon-Khmer, and some others profess Buddhism, most non-Lao adhere to tribal religions, in some cases influenced by Buddhist, Brahmanic, or Confucian notions (see ch. 4, Social Systems). Generally, a spirit cult is the major element in these tribal religions, but details of belief and practice vary considerably; in some groups an ancestor cult is significant.

Both Roman Catholic and Protestant missions have made efforts to convert the people, with very little success. Indifference rather than hostility has marked the attitude of most of the people of Laos to missionary activity. It has been roughly estimated that no more than 50,000 persons, chiefly of the minority ethnic groups, have been converted by either Catholic or Protestant missionaries. The Catholics have been the more active and claimed in mid-1970 approximately 30,000 adherents.

## BUDDHISM

Buddhism emerged initially as an effort made by Lord Siddharta Gautama (563-483 B.C.), a North Indian prince to revive religious consciousness in India at a time when Brahmanism had become an elaborate sacerdotal and sacrificial religious system. Gautama (in later life dubbed Buddha, "The Enlightened One") rejected his high status and the rights and wealth his status conferred on him to practice a meticulous and demanding asceticism. Gautama and his followers during his lifetime saw the system he founded as the truest way, within the Brahmanic framework, to escape the pain and sorrow of life and to attain a sublime state. Gautama did not claim supernatural inspiration for his views.

For over two centuries Buddhism remained an ascetic ideal governing the growing communities of monks who followed the elaborate rules detailed by the Buddha. The entire complexion of the movement changed, however, when Asoka (d. 232 B.C.), ruler of the area in which the Buddha had lived and worked, accepted Buddhism and then proceeded to conquer most of the Indian subcontinent. Buddhism was spread far and wide, being superimposed upon the Brahmanism that was the pattern of Indian civilization. In 246 B.C. the monk Mahinda converted Ceylon, and the stage was set for the splitting of Buddhism into two schools.

In the second century B.C. the Mahayana (Greater Vehicle) Buddhism doctrines were developed. By reinterpreting what Buddha had taught about laymen, by incorporating into Buddhist doctrines many aspects of other philosophical schools, by defying the Buddha himself, and by superimposing upon the entire doctrine a pervasive optimism, a broader ethic was created than had obtained in the original version. Buddhism as interpreted in the Mahayana tracts offered hope and salvation—nirvana—to one and all, even though the ascetics could achieve it more readily. Mahayana Buddhism swept through India, Central Asia, China, Japan, and Southeast Asia, along with some Brahmanic Hindu beliefs and practices.

In Ceylon, however, the original doctrine was preserved and perpetuated as Hinayana (Lesser Vehicle) Buddhism—or Theravada (School of the Elders) Buddhism, as its followers prefer to call it. Maintaining its position in Ceylon, Theravada Buddhism eventually came to replace Mahayana Buddhism in Laos, Burma, Thailand, and Cambodia, at roughly the same time as the main migration of the Lao and other Tai groups into mainland Southeast

Asia occurred. It has remained the dominant religion of these five countries.

Theravada Buddhism brought with it a scriptural and literary language called Pali. Pali, of northern Indian origin and related to Sanskrit, is still used in Theravada Buddhism liturgy, and the schools for the training of monks beyond the novice stage are called Pali schools.

Archaeologists have discovered remains of carved statues of the Buddha in Laos dating from the twelfth century, but there is no historical record of the introduction of Buddhism into the country until A.D. 1356. In that year a Buddhist *wat* (see Glossary) was built to house the Prabang Buddha, one of the most famous Buddha images of the Theravada community, which the king had received from his royal Khmer father-in-law (together with Pali scriptures borne by a mission of monks) and which reputedly had been given at a much earlier date to the Khmer royal house by a king of Ceylon. The *wat* was built at Muong Swa, at the site of the capital of a new Tai kingdom, Lan Xang, in the upper Mekong River valley (see ch. 3, Historical Setting).

Although this first king of Lan Xang was a Theravada Buddhist, the conversion of the Lao was a slow process. It was centuries before Buddhism became the predominant faith. Setthathirath, king of Lan Xang from 1547 to 1571, made his capital, Vientiane (Vien Chang), a holy center of Theravada Buddhism. During the reign of Souligna Vongsa, which ended in 1694, official schools teaching the Buddhist doctrine were established for the first time in Laos.

The weakening of Laotian power in the eighteenth century brought damage to Lao religious shrines. In 1778 Siamese General Mahakrassad ravaged the country and captured the capital of Vientiane. He took back with him to the Siamese capital (near present-day Bangkok) the Emerald Buddha, another venerable Buddha image, made of green jasper, that had first belonged to the Tai kingdom of Chieng Rai (in present-day northern Thailand) but had long been in Laos, first at Muong Swa (present-day Luang Prabang) and, since 1564, at Vientiane. Another Siamese conquest in 1828 caused the destruction of scores of *wat* in the major towns, and in 1873 Yunnanese burned That Luang, the famous stupa (see Glossary) near Vientiane.

### Basic Beliefs

Theravada Buddhism is not prescriptive, authoritative, or exclusive in its attitude toward its followers and is tolerant of other religions. It merely presents a way for those who will follow it. Buddhism is based on three concepts: *dharma*, the doctrine of

Buddha, a guide to right action and belief; *karma*, the retribution of actions, the responsibility of a man for the sum total of his actions in all his incarnations, past and present; and *sangha*, the monastic brotherhood, the ascetic order within which a man can improve the sum of his actions. None of these concepts was original with Buddha, but to the Brahmanic doctrine of rebirth, with its fatalistic determination of pain and sorrow in each life, the Buddha added a hope of escape. There was no promise of heaven or of a life after death. Instead, there was salvation in the form of a final extinction of one's core of individual being, making possible complete release from the cycle of births and deaths and the inevitable suffering while part of that cycle. The state in which the illusions of existence are conquered, achieved through karmic accumulation of merit, comes as a result of having gained enlightenment and is called nirvana (in Pali, *nibbana*—literally meaning, "blown out, as a candle flame").

The essence of Buddhism is contained in the Four Noble Truths taught by the Buddha: suffering exists; suffering has a cause, and that cause is thirst or craving for existence; such a craving can be stopped; and there is an Eightfold Path by which a permanent state of peace can be attained. Simply stated, the Eightfold Path consists of right understanding, right purpose, right speech, right conduct, right vocation, right effort, right thinking, and right meditation.

The Four Noble Truths illustrate the extent to which Buddhist doctrine as it was developed by the Buddha relies upon logic rather than revelation or divine inspiration. The element of divinity was not introduced until the Mahayana doctrine was devised and has not figured to any significant extent in Theravada belief.

The average layman cannot hope for nirvana after the end of this life, but he can, by complying to his best ability with the doctrine's basic rules of moral conduct, hope to improve his *karma* and thereby better his condition in the next incarnation.

The doctrine of *karma* holds that, by the working of a just and totally impersonal cosmic law, one's actions in this life and in all previous incarnations determine which position along the hierarchy of living things one will occupy in the next incarnation. An individual's *karma* can be favorably affected by certain acts and omissions. The omissions are summarized in five rules that all Buddhists are expected to try to live up to, although laxity in the case of the fifth is regarded as less serious than in the case of the first four. These omissions are: not killing, stealing, indulging in forbidden sexual pleasures, telling lies, and taking intoxicants or stupefying drugs or liquors.

The most effective way to work actively to improve one's *karma* is to earn merit (*hed boun*—literally, "do good," "give an offering").

Although any act of benevolence or generosity can be said to be a source of merit, the Lao tend to regard the opportunities for earning merit as primarily connected with interaction with the *sangha*, supporting it with money and goods and participating in its activities. Among the best ways for a male to earn merit are to enter the *sangha* as a monk (after age twenty) or as a novice or to live in the *wat* as a temple boy; and, in the case of women—usually the elderly—to become a nun. Other ways are to sponsor the ordination of a monk or novice; contribute to a permanent feature of the *wat*, for example, paying for all or part of the construction of a building use by the *sangha* or donating or paying for some appurtenance for the use of the *sangha*; feed members of the *sangha* at a public meal; and provide food for either of the two daily meals of the *sangha*. Because of the primacy of the concern of the donor with improving his own *karma* by such good deeds, the Lao Buddhist layman always thanks the *sangha* member when presenting his gift for having provided him with the opportunity to earn merit. The monk or novice, for his part, laboring under the monastic obligation to learn detachment from worldly concerns, merely accepts the offering without thanks, avoiding any appearance of interest in the quality or quantity of the gift.

## Buddhism and the State

The Buddhist clergy is organized into a well-defined hierarchy, and there are close connections between the religious and political spheres. The Constitution of 1947 designates Buddhism as the official state religion and requires that the king be "Supreme Protector" of the faith. Subject to procedures involving the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the highest levels of the religious hierarchy, the king has the power to appoint the *phra sangharaja* (religious head of the Buddhist *sangha*). The king's religious role is largely ceremonial, and his position as Supreme Protector appears to be displayed more in ritual and charitable acts than through any active administrative role.

One significant aspect of Buddhism in political affairs has been the taking of the political oath of allegiance in a temple, an act required of all notables. After the Siamese conquest the oath to Siamese suzerainty was required in the same temple, as was the oath to the French after their assumption of the protectorate, and the oath of allegiance to the king is still taken there.

The *chao khana khoueng* (provincial religious leader) is nominated by the religious heads of the districts within the province, in concert with the corresponding political chiefs. These nominees are then recommended by the *phra sangharaja* and the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and they are appointed by royal ordinance. Below the *chao khana khoueng*, religious leaders are appointed by their religious superiors at the next higher level, on the recommendation of a conference of religious and political officers of the area affected and with the concurrence of the political chief at the level of the appointing authority, who has the implicit right of veto. Thus, the *chao khana muong* (head of the district) is appointed by the *chao khana khoueng*, having been nominated by the religious and civil officers of the *muong* (district). A similar procedure is followed in choosing the new *chao khana tasseng* (religious head of a canton) and the *chao athikan* (abbot, or head of a *wat*).

The *phra sangharaja* is nominated by provincial heads who make their choice from a list drawn up by the cabinet and presented by the minister of religion. The king then formally makes the appointment.

*Sangha* organization includes a system of advisory and disciplinary councils. At the canton level is the Council of Discipline, presided over by the canton head monk and including the canton political chief, the leader of the *wat*, two bonzes, and a layman learned in Buddhist regulations. Each district has a religious tribunal over which the *chao khana muong* presides. Its membership includes the *chao khana muong* or his delegate, two bonzes, and one layman. At the top, the Religious Council, composed of five church dignitaries called *chao rajakhana*, advises the *phra sangharaja* on policy and personnel matters.

Disciplinary councils may punish a bonze for infractions of either the religious or the civil code with defrocking and a sentence of from six months to two years in prison. One of the important regulations enforced by these councils is the rule forbidding a bonze to use opium or alcohol.

The degree of secular government control over the religious hierarchy and the priesthood was intensified in a royal ordinance of May 25, 1959. As a result of this, for example, all correspondence between the administrative levels of the *sangha* must pass through government channels, and the construction of a new *wat* requires government permission. This brought about a degree of resentment in the *sangha* against government interference. As an effort to bridge the gap between the political elite and the *sangha*, in 1965 the Young Buddhists Association was formed in Vientiane. Its members came chiefly from the upper ranks of government service.

The close relationship between the religious hierarchy and the state has not led to the direct involvement of the *sangha* or of individual bonzes in politics. Occasionally, a monk—even one of long standing—has left the *sangha* to enter politics, but he has done so as a layman. The community of bonzes has been dependent on the state and has developed no economic base that might sustain or encourage independent political action. The stress on the value placed on detachment from worldy considerations would, in any case, militate strongly against overt political activity of a formal nature by the *sangha* or a member thereof.

There are conflicting reports concerning the role of the *sangha* in the domestic conflict that has gone on in Laos since before its independence. In the first Government of National Union established in 1957, the Lao Patriotic Front (Neo Lao Hak Sat—NLHS), the political front of the NLHS, obtained the Ministry of Religious Affairs for one of its members and is alleged to have sought the support of the *sangha* (see ch. 9, Political Dynamics). A July 1969 report of accounts given by refugees from the NLHS area in Xieng Khouang, however, indicated that the Communists were engaged in an effort to reduce the role of Buddhism in the lives of villagers. All forms of merit making were allegedly curtailed; visits to the *wat* were discouraged; monks were forbidden to receive food from villagers; traditional festivals had not been held; and monks were required to perform certain labor projects—although excused from portage duties—and were required to grow their food, in direct violation of *sangha* rules. Novices indoctrinated by the communist cadres were alleged to have been installed in various *wat* to attempt to convert the Buddhist clergy to the NLHS view.

### The *Sangha* and the Wat

There are two Buddhist monastic orders in Laos—the Mahanakay and the Thammayut. The former is by far the larger in terms of the number of monks and *wat*. The Thammayut, a reform movement initially patronized by the Thai royal house in the mid-nineteenth century, was subsequently introduced into southern Laos, where it is primarily concentrated. There appear to be no basic doctrinal differences between the two sects, although there are differences of opinion concerning the proper observance of monastic rules. Thammayut monasteries insist upon stricter adherence to all *sangha* rules than do the majority monasteries.

Nearly every sizable village supports at least one *wat*, which is the focus of the religious and social life of the villagers. A 1964 estimate of the number of *wat* in all Laos, including Pathet Lao, areas, was 2,174. The *sangha* at that time was estimated at nearly 16,000 including monks and novices. In 1970, however, statistics released by the Ministry of Religious Affairs gave the number of *wat* for the entire kingdom as 1,833 and the total number of bonzes as 4,316. Information was lacking in 1971 that could explain the great difference between the former and latter figures for *sangha* membership.

A *wat* consists of buildings directly connected with the

Theravada Buddhist cult and for the use of villagers and visitors. The whole is enclosed by a wall or fence. The main buildings include a large meeting hall; living quarters for the *sangha* (and if there are nuns, separate living quarters for them); and the *sim*, or temple building in which the main image of Buddha and other temple treasures are kept. The *sim* is the place where prayer sessions and special rites—for example, ordination of monks—are held. On occasion the monks preach the *dharma* to the laity in the *sim*. The villagers generally bring their daily food offerings to the members of the *sangha* assembled in the meeting hall. Since the *sangha* depends upon the local population for all its material needs, the *wat* is always located near a center of population. Larger towns generally have more than one *wat*; the building of a new *wat* is one of the major ways by which a new hamlet or neighborhood manifests its separate identity.

The Theravada Buddhist rule that each male should spend some part of his life as a member of the *sangha* still has significance to the Lao, although the practice is reportedly somewhat less widespread than formerly. The Buddhist retreat period, the three-month period of heightened monastic religious activity and asceticism that occurs during the rainy season (from the full moon of the eighth Laotian month—usually in July—to that of the eleventh Laotian month—usually in October), is the most popular time for males to enter the *sangha*, either as monks or as novices. This is because the merit earned by residing in the *sangha* for that period is reckoned to be equivalent to the merit earned by a whole year's residence.

Both entrance into and separation from the *sangha* are the choice of the individual, as is the decision whether to become a monk or a novice, although one cannot be ordained a monk until the age of twenty. The distinction between monk and novice consists chiefly in the greater number of rules that monks must obey. The novice, in addition to making the ten basic vows for entering the *sangha*—the five Buddhist vows for all persons and five others that deal with requirements of asceticism, including not eating after midday, not dancing or singing, not having luxurious possessions or beds, and not having gold or silver—need only obey seventy-five monastic rules, whereas the monk is obliged to comply with the full 227 rules of the monastic order.

The status of the seniormost novice is below that of the juniormost monk. There also exist within the monk category various grades of monkhood based on qualifications in priestly learning, chiefly the study of the sacred Pali texts. Novices are instructed in the Pali texts by the monks. Also attached to the *sangha* are temple boys, usually between the ages of ten and fifteen, who perform various personal services for the *sangha*, assist at ceremonies, and help with housekeeping in exchange for being tutored in reading and writing Lao and the memorization of parts of the Pali litanies. For some Lao living in remote area, the schooling given the temple boys is virtually the sum of formal education available to children.

Women may not be ordained, nor may they have any physical contact with a monk or novice. Having a son ordained into the *sangha*, however, brings great merit to his mother as well as to his father. It is usually the women who give the daily alms to the *sangha* and who make the sacred offerings in the *sim*. There are some old women living within the *wat*, although not in the section reserved for the *sangha*, who act as nuns. They decorate altars, do some housekeeping chores, shave their heads and eyebrows, and try to lead an ascetic live of detachment.

Life in the *sangha* is dominated by restrictions and prohibitions. A monk or novice must obey the five basic precepts of Buddhist morality more scrupulously than does the layman. Whereas the lay Buddhist is merely enjoined not to kill, the monk is under stronger prescription. For instance, he carries a strainer at all times in order that, when he drinks water, he can avoid the accidental killing of an insect by swallowing it. The layman must not steal, but the monk or novice is forbidden to take anything that has not been expressly given to him. He may not eat any food except that which merit-earning laymen give him. A lay Buddhist may not indulge in forbidden sexual pleasures, but the monk must avoid any physical contact with females. Since women are the chief donors of the monks' daily food, various avoidance techniques are used to keep female donors' hands from touching the monk when they fill his begging bowl. The rules of honesty and sobriety are likewise more exacting for the monk than for laymen.

Moreover, the monk or novice has duties to perform and other proscriptions to obey. A partial list of regulations governing the bonze's behavior indicates their stringency and ubiquity. He may not seek pleasure in looking at women or in giving them gifts of flowers. He is not permitted to till the soil. He must not consume food after noon. His head, eyebrows, and beard must be shaved every two weeks. He must offer advice to the laity on spiritual matters only when requested and, when requested, he may not refuse. The bonze may mingle in royal (political) affairs only as they concern religion, and he must not preach in any language other than Pali.

A bonze's day is generally full and well ordered. He is up by 5:00 A.M.each morning and by 6:00 A.M., after his toilet and prayers, setsoff to beg his daily food, usually accompanied by a temple boy. After begging, the bonzes return to the *wat* for a simple breakfast, and then each turns to his duties for the day. Some study; others teach; some perform necessary chores in the *wat* compound; and others perform various ceremonies in the village and *wat*. Shortly before noon they take their last meal of the day, which is followed by a period of rest and contemplation. At the end of the afternoon they return to their allotted tasks.

These proscriptions and obligations are not always scrupulously obeyed. According to Nhouy Abhay, a Lao writing on Buddhism in his own country, most of the bonzes are less rigid in their attitudes and less disciplined in their behavior than the monks of some other Theravada Buddhist countries.

Nhouy Abhay noted the minimal doctrinal knowledge of most Laotian monks. Lao Buddhism has never shown much interest in doctrinal disputation or speculation; the emphasis has been on obedience to certain precepts and on performance of certain ceremonies and rituals. Buddhist monks, however, still have great prestige in the community. This remains true despite the criticism directed at some of them and despite a slowly developing tendency for minor Buddhist officials to discard their robes in favor of government employment, in part perhaps because promotion within the Buddhist hierarchy comes very slowly. Even with these tendencies, government officials on tour show the proper respect for bonzes of even the lowest degree. This is in part the result of the fact that a Buddhist believes that prostrating himself before a member of the *sangha* is a means of earning merit and is the proper gesture for any layman to make, even the king.

There have been no reports of declining popular support for the faith and for the clergy. Giving alms to the monks and supporting *wat* projects are still a basic part of the life of the common believer, who considers them to be effective ways of gaining merit toward better reincarnations.

Moreover, the bonzes perform a number of functions important in the life of the village. They officiate at all the formal religious festivals and ceremonies. Their presence is indispensable at marriages and funerals, and they are often called in at the naming ceremonies of infants, since some of the bonzes specialize in the astrological lore essential to propitious naming.

Awareness of the problem of standards among the bonzes led to a royal decree in 1947 that established the Buddhist Institute in Vientiane, with branches in each of the provinces. The chief purposes of the institute are to disseminate religious information and to elevate the standard of education among the clergy. The institute in 1971 was nominally in charge of education in the Pali schools, the training centers for future monks; however, administration appeared to be chiefly in the hands of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. In the mid-1960s there were reportedly nearly

150 Pali primary schools and sixteen Pali secondary schools, excluding those in the NLHS areas (see ch. 5, Health, Education, and Welfare). Before the establishment of these schools monks had to travel to Bangkok for advanced and specialized training. The institute, with the aid of the government, is also collecting and preserving documents of religious and historical importance. Works on Lao religious doctrine and on the history of Lao art are published in Pali, Lao, and French.

## *PHI* WORSHIP

Antedating Buddhism, and mixed with it still, is an ancient and pervasive belief in various types of *phi* (spirits) present throughout the universe. These *phi* hold great power over the destinies of men. Belief in the *phi* appears not only among the laity but also at the highest levels of the organized Buddhist clergy. Despite sporadic attempts by various governments (beginning with King Phothisarath's decree of 1527), designed to suppress the cult of the *phi*, belief in the *phi* lives on (see ch. 3, Historical Setting).

Nearly all Lao Buddhism bears a strong element of *phi* worship. A bonze may be called into a household in which one of the members is sick in order to participate in the ceremonies and music-making designed to exorcise the malevolent *phi* from the body of the victim. Many bonzes are thought to have a special knowledge of the *phi*.

There is also an explicit tie of *phi* worship to the *sangha* in the form of the altar of the *phi khoun wat* (beneficent spirit of the monastery). The altar consists of a miniature Lao hut, envisioned as the house of the phi, that is built on stilts no more than two feet high and is usually situated in a corner of the *wat* surrounded by bushes. The village *phi* cult master, usually not a present member of the *sangha*, is often the person responsible for the upkeep and rites connected with the *wat phi* altar. The *phi khoun wat* is alleged to be the soul of the first abbot of the monastery, and it is the cult master's duty to inform him of all important parish events, such as the entrance and departure of members of the *sangha*, the beginning of a journey by a monk, and the visit of strangers to the village or *wat* community.

*Phi* are ubiquitous and diverse. Some are connected with the universal elements—earth, heaven, fire, and water—each of which has its *phi*. Many Lao also believe in an ancient doctrine that the human being is a union of thirty-two organs and that spirits called *kwan* watch over each of them. According to one source, twenty of these *kwan* are said to be inherited from the father; and twelve, from the mother. According to another authority, these *kwan* fly from the body at death and unite in varying combinations with *kwan* from other bodies to be reincarnated in another living person.

Not reincarnated are the spirits of those who died in childbirth, by accident, or through violence. These spirits, called *phi phetu*, are particularly malevolent and roam the earth tormenting the living.

There are *phi* of familiar places: the household, the river, the trees, the village, and the land. Others are unfamiliar and particularly fearsome, such as the *phi* of the forests and other wild places. The unwary may enter there, never to return or to return so transformed as to be unrecognizable by friends and relatives.

The *phi* have power over all the affairs of men. Success in any enterprise required the favor of the *phi*. Nearly every house has an altar on which offerings to the *phi* are made, and there are shrines to *phi* in village lanes. Each *phi* is believed to be pleased by different offerings and sacrifices, and a farm family may sacrifice a substantial portion of its animals in sacrifices to various *phi*.

Generally, sacrifices of offerings and attendant ritual are performed by the individual directly concerned with gaining the favor of a spirit or by the head of a household on behalf of its members. In most villages, however, there is one person, usually an older man, who is believed to have special knowledge of the *phi*. He is called upon to use this knowledge and his understanding of astrology and other matters to choose the appropriate day for a wedding or other important event, to find lost things, to conduct the annual ritual of feeding the village spirits and, sometimes, to perform household rites. Such a man is not a full-time priest or a member of any organization; he acquires his knowledge without formal training.

Important rituals for propitiating the *phi* are connected with the growing and harvesting of rice. Formerly, the ruling family in each kingdom or principality played an important part in the ritual preceding spring plowing. It was held that the royal lines had a special relationship to the guardian spirits of the land.

At least some kinds of illness are believed to be caused by evil spirits. Other kinds are attributed to the loss of one or more *kwan*, since all must be present for perfect health. There are several kinds of specialists who treat illnesses. The kind of illness and its cause are determined by divination, and the appropriate practitioner is called in. He may be a bonze who sprinkles holy water and recites Buddhist scripture in Pali, a herbalist, or an exorcist (often a woman).

Villagers may believe that important political figures are able to drive out evil spirits troubling a community or to heal a sick person. Such persons may be asked to help when they are visiting the rural areas.

There is also a widespread belief that some people are possessed by evil spirits or demons (*ho*). These people, called *phi-pop*, are greatly feared by the community because they have the power to cast spells and work magic. Some *phi-pop* are believed able to kill animals and men by incantations and glances. The *phi-pop* allegedly can reduce a buffalo hide to the size of a grain of rice; when the victim swallows this grain, it swells to its original size and bursts the stomach.

A *phi-pop* is believed to inherit his power from a parent or relative, but a victim of *phi-pop* may sometimes become another *phi-pop*. Sometimes a *phi-pop* may be persuaded to cure his victim. In other instances, a practitioner is asked to effect a cure, usually by removing the foreign object from the victim's body. Formerly, a person believed to be a *phi-pop* was sometimes put to death by villagers. Even now he (more often, she) may be ostracized and forced to wander.

## RELIGIOUS RITES AND FESTIVALS

Theravada Buddhism as practiced in Laos has never developed a prescribed, priest-dominated ritual for the celebration or consecration of important events in the life of the individual, the family, or the society as a whole. Buddhism offers a way of life, but it prescribes rules only for the members of the *sangha*. Consequently, although bonzes are present as indispensable participants in virtually all the affairs of the people, it is the folkways that set the patterns; these folkways contain as much of *phi* propitiation and popular customs as of Buddhist doctrinal practices.

The core of every popular festival or celebration, whether traditional, official, or spontaneous, is the *soukwan* (also known as *baci*), which is an invitation and reception given to one of the thirty-two *kwan*. Some venerable person (usually a man who was once a bonze), after invoking the mythological deities, invites the *kwan* of all present, if wandering, to return and bestow gaiety and well-being on their earthly hosts and feast with them from the *phakwan* (repast of the soul)—the tastefully arranged and decorated platters of food and drink. The wandering *kwan*, having been received with offerings, is tethered in place by a thread knotted to the owner's wrist.

A common element in Buddhist ritual is the use of water. Such use has never been formally prescribed, but it is important to the faith; in the ritual the participants, the images of the Buddha, and the altars to the *phi* are sprinkled.

### Rites of Transition

The ritual of marriage involves the *sangha* only in part. All preliminaries having been arranged in traditional fashion and the date having been set, the bridegroom appears at the bride's house the evening before the actual wedding feast. In the presence of the bride and bridegroom the bonzes bless begging bowls filled with water. The wrists of the couple and the bonzes are tied together with a cotton thread, which is then tied loosely around the bowls of water. This thus conserves and unites the *kwan* of the celebrants in the presence of the consecrated water.

The bowls of water are carefully preserved overnight, and early in the morning the bonzes, relatives, and friends sprinkle the young couple with the purifying water. Then comes the *soukwan*, in this case the marriage feast, which is the clinching ceremony. Its exact hour of commencement is set by astrologers. After certain symbolic preliminaries, bride and bridegroom are seated together in the presence of the friends and relatives in front of the feast and the wedding gifts. At this time two bonzes recite in unison the prayers for the happiness of the union. Not all marriages are celebrated with as much formality. Both elopement and simply living together are common, but the ceremony is a traditional ideal favored by the well-to-do.

Funeral practices are elaborate, and bonzes play a great part; again the ceremonial aspects are fixed by custom rather than by formal religious prescription. Cremation is a principle for Buddhists, and any family than can afford it arranges such a ceremony. After the body has been prepared and placed in a coffin, a series of family ceremonies and feasts precede all public expression. If there is any show of grief, it is brief and takes place early in this private period of the obsequies, for the Lao believe that a family show of sadness would retard the rebirth of the spirit of the deceased in a better existence or prevent its attainment of nirvana.

Bonzes are present during the entire period, praying and reciting. The burden of their recitals is the necessity of death as a prerequisite to rebirth in a better life. They assure the *kwan* of the deceased that his family takes account of his good fortune in being liberated from this life—that they await their own turn patiently and joyfully. "They are happy without you! Follow then your own destiny!"

After the family rites the body is placed on display at the home. The wealthier the family, the more elaborate is the display. A shelter is built in the compound or garden, and the public feast begins. A constant stream of guests pours through the household day and night, viewing the body and partaking of food and drink. Cremation is delayed in proportion to the wealth of the family. For as many days as the festivities last the bonzes continue to recite the Pali litanies, singing and chanting endlessly as the laymen celebrate the death as a happy event in the cycle of existence. The *phi* are placated, as usual. Finally, the body and its coffin are transferred to the cremation pyre, away from the village in a field or on a river-bank. As much intricacy of design and decoration in coffin and pyre as the means of the family permit is the rule.

Around this catafalque the celebration by family, friends, and bonzes again goes on for days. While the bonzes continue their litanies, both the feasting and the lauding of the deceased reach new heights. The general festivity is also the occasion for courting among the young.

Finally, after the opening of the coffin, a last ritual washing of the corpse, and its exposure to the open sky, the cremation takes place. All present contribute their bit of fire, and those officiating make certain that the flaming mass falls in an "auspicious" direction; the pyre of an official of the government should, for example, fall in the direction of the capital. After the cremation, there may be many other activities: wrestling matches, buffalo fights, coin hunts, speeches, dancing, and puppet shows. Buddhist belief appears to assign no value to the preservation of the ashes of the corpse, although in the case of a high official or wealthy family a shrine may be built in the *wat*, and the ashes may be placed therein.

If the family of the deceased is not able to afford this elaborate ritual or any part of it, the body is placed in a roughhewn coffin; the bonzes recite the necessary litanies, and the body is buried in the forest. The grave is unmarked; the quicker the evidence of the grave disappears, the more auspicious it is for the deceased and the family. Otherwise, the spirit of the dead man may join the *phi phetu*, of which there are already many to plague the lives of the villagers.

For victims of childbirth, epidemics, suicide, and certain other extraordinary causes of death, there is neither burial nor cremation. The body is thrown into the nearest river. The French fought this practice, but they were only partially successful.

When a child's hair is cut and on various other occasions, such as when an individual dons new garments, prayers are said in the presence of a bonze. Although there are no Buddhist rites at childbirth and none corresponding to baptism, it is most often a bonze who is asked to suggest an auspicious name for the child.

### Festivals

The expression of public faith is most evident during festivals—both national celebrations and the innumerable occasions special to certain *wat*, villages, and districts.

The Laotian lunar year begins in December, but Lao prefer to think of the year as beginning with the fifth month (April), when the astrological signs point to light and prosperity and the hot season is about to be followed by the rains. The end of the old year is celebrated with a procession, with prayers, and with a long period of festivities. The houses are swept, symbolically indicating the expulsion of the evil and marauding spirits that might have taken up residence. On the first day of the year the bonzes and the people cleanse the statutes of the Buddha with holy water. It is a time for visiting, and all dress in their best clothing. Votive mounds (usually of sand or stones) are erected in the courts of the *wat* and along the banks of the Mekong. Streamers of colored paper bearing the signs of the zodiac decorate homes and buildings.

In Luang Prabang the festival is elaborately celebrated with the release of birds and animals, processions of royal elephants, and court gatherings. The king himself sprinkles the Buddha images with holy water. Dances and masques commemorate the legendary ancestors of the Lao, and offerings are made of fruits, flowers, new vegetables, and candles. (It is the growing season, and many spring rites have crept into new year celebrations.) The king gives a feast for the bonzes in Luang Prabang, and since 1941 there have been festivities expecially for the children—who are "exposed" to the good genie of the new year.

The festival of Vixakha Bouxa or Boun Bang-Fay occurs in the sixth month (at the full moon of May) and is popularly called the Festival of the Rockets. It commemorates the birth, enlightenment, and death of Buddha. Bonzes are shown more than usual deference at this time. There are dances, processions, puppet shows, and general festivities even more jubilant than most Laotian celebrations. Children, young people, and expectant mothers are blessed; there are offerings to the bonzes. The ideas of pilgrimage and merit making play major roles in the processions, decorations, and puppet shows.

Grafted onto this Buddhist festival are important Lao rites. The festival gets its name from one of these, a contest between *wat* communities as to which can build and launch the rocket that makes the longest flight. Monks are generally the best rocket makers. Also connected with this festival are erotic songs, dances, and rites celebrating life and fertility. The government has reported that such rites were on the wane in the 1960s.

The sacrifice of the buffalo, a pre-Buddhist tradition, is also celebrated in the sixth Laotian month. In legend a lord of the sixth century A.D. raided a religious sanctuary and killed those within; the buffalo sacrificed is supposed to atone for human blood and make the violent death of humans unnecessary. In Luang Prabang the festival has become the occasion for the honoring of the *naga*—the national spirits and protectors of the king.

Khao Vatsa, the beginning of a period of *sangha* retreat in the eighth Laotian month (the full moon of July), coincides with the height of the rainy season. During Khao Vatsa the *patimokkha*, a confessional formula, is recited by the bonzes, and extensive processions are held by the clergy and the laity. There is little rejoicing because the bonzes, so important in the life of the village, are about to go into retreat for three months.

Ho Khao Padap Dinh (Feast of the Dead) occurs in the ninth month (August and September). Its origin is Buddha's commandment to honor the dead with gifts, prayers, and thoughts. There are, as usual, gifts to the *sangha*. Related to the Ho Khao Padap Dinh is the festival of Ho Khao Slak, in the tenth month (September and October). It also involves offerings to the *sangha*. The sources of the offerings are decided by lot. This has also been a traditional time for giving children gifts of toys, sweets, and other good things to eat.

Boun Ok Vatsa, at the end of the period of retreat in the eleventh month (October), is an occasion of general rejoicing. The bonzes recite the *patimokkha*, confess their evil and careless thoughts, and leave the *wat* for pilgrimages. They are given new mats, robes, begging bowls, and serving sets for betel.

Also known as the Festival of the Waters, the Boun Ok Vatsa is a time for decorating homes and the *wat*, for processions, and for pirogue races on the rivers. Nominally, all is organized for the *naga* and tutelary spirits, and there are ceremonies for the ousting of the evil *phi*, who have been lurking in the houses during the rainy season.

Makha Bouxa, in the third month (February), originates in the Buddhist texts. It commemorates the calling together of Buddha's disciples before his death and his entrance into a state of nirvana. Prayers, processions, offerings, and masques mark the ceremonies.

Boun Phan Vet, in the twelfth month (November), also has its origin in the sacred texts. At this time certain national rites are held in That Luang, the temple located nearly two miles from Vientiane that is the traditional repository of relics of the Buddha. These rites commemorate Lao origins and historical events, but they are not always celebrated outside the capital. Outside Vientiane, the Boun Phan Vet is celebrated at different times in different communities, as a feast in honor of Prince Vessantara, an earlier incarnation of the Buddha. The prince, who exemplified perfect charity and detachment, is honored by the ordination of village males into the *sangha*. Also during his festival dramas and lovesong contests are held in the *wat* courtyard. There are also village cockfights and banquets and various social gatherings involving hospitality by villagers to friends and kinsmen from villages that are not celebrating the festival on that date. Such hospitality is often reciprocated.

Other rites that unite the village in worship are held twice each year and are directed toward the *phi ban*, the tutelary spirit of the entire village. These rites consist chiefly of sacrifices (*lieng phi*, literally, "feeding the spirit") held under the supervision of the cult master of the village *phi*. Of the two annual ceremonies, the more important is the one held in the sixth Laotian month at the onset of the rainy season. Its purpose is to ask for a bountiful harvest, whereas the other ceremony, held after the harvest, is one of thanksgiving.

## TRIBAL RELIGION

### Tribal Tai

Belief in the *phi* is universal among the tribal Tai (see ch. 4, Social Systems). A strong ancestor cult has also been recorded among some groups, particularly the Black Tai (Tai Dam). In the absence of Buddhism in most tribal Tai communities, there are fairly well developed notions of life after death and a fairly well organized priesthood.

Only among the Lu of southern China and northern Laos has Buddhism become important, but there are conflicting statements on its status. Some observers report that Buddhism has taken firm hold; others, that it still has a missionary status in Lu culture. In any case the belief in *phi* persists, as it does among the Lao.

Among the Black Tai there are several classes of *phi*. An important class consists of *ten* (spirits of the soil), arranged in a hierarchy. *Ten luong*, the supreme spirit of the soil, is responsible for soil fertility, and there are *ten* at the level of the principality or district and the village. Each year, before planting, a ritual honors these spirits, and they are again honored at harvesttime. In the meantime, individual farmers perform rituals to their own ancestral spirits (when the buds appear on the rice) and sacrifice a pig or a chicken to the new rice. A sacrifice is offered to the rice spirit after the harvest to induce the spirit to sleep in the granary.

Like some Lao, the Black Tai believe that each individual has thirty-two souls. In this case, it is thought that each soul is formed by two male spirits and one female spirit. The close tie between the ruling families and the *ten* is indicated by the belief that six of the souls of members of these families are formed by the *ten luong*. The thirty-two souls leave the body at death, some going "beyond the sky," others remaining on the altar of the ancestors.

The marked social stratification of the Black Tai is reflected in their conceptions of life after death (see ch. 4, Social Systems). Commoners (those not of royal descent) go to a village in the next world in which life is much as it is on earth. Members of the lesser nobility are distributed, according to their rank, to several other villages, the very important chiefs going to a special celestial village where they live idyllic afterlives. Except for these great chiefs, the souls of the dead eventually leave these villages and return to earth. The souls of women follow the souls of their husbands.

The priests associated with the *ten* cult are called *mo* and come from the Luong and Ka families of the Black Tai. A son inherits the position from his father, but he must undergo training. After passing through several levels, a candidate for the priesthood achieves the title *mwo lam* and is entitled to perform the rituals associated with the *ten*. There are, apparently, other types of practitioners concerned with healing who may be hired by individuals.

The Red Tai (Tai Daeng) believe in a hierarchy of gods and spirits, each of which resides in an appropriate level or place in heaven or on earth. Only the lower spirits—equivalent to the *phi* of other Tai-speaking peoples—directly affect the lives of the people and must be propitiated. The gods, however, are thanked for harvests at annual festivals.

### Lao Theung

The little that is known of the religion of the Lao Theung (the Mon-Khmer tribes) indicates that most of them believe in a range of spirits but that in some groups (for example, the So and the Lamet) a cult of the ancestors is quite important. Buddhism is well established in a few villages of some tribes. Buddhist influence is said to be quite strong among the Sek of Khammouane Province, and there are Buddhist villages among the Loven, the Oy, the P'u Noi, and the Khmu.

Among the Khmu (the largest of these groups) the spirits are called *hrooy*. Like the *phi* of the Tai-speaking people, the *hrooy* are everywhere, but the house spirit and one of the jungle spirits appear to be especially important. Evil spirits may possess people who then become dangerous (a pattern strongly resembling that of the *phi-pop* among the Lao).

The rituals of the Khmu, especially those connected with the guardian spirits of the village are closed to strangers, usually by bamboo symbols laid in the paths, and a stranger who enters is held responsible for any misfortune that occurs.

A combination of spirit worship and an ancestral cult prevails among the Lamet, but the salient characteristics of the religion of these people is the importance of the priest-chief (*xemia*). This office is usually inherited in the male line, but the candidate must be approved by the married men of the village. His authority does not extend beyond the village. His religious duties consist mainly of carrying out the sacrifices to the guardian spirits of the village.

### Meo

The Meo are animistic but also conceive of a supreme being, with whom man has lost close communion. The spirits are believed to control the fortunes of men and to influence individual behavior. Specifically, illness is attributed to the actions of evil spirits, although some illness is a consequence of loss of soul essence. Curers, whether men or women, given their magical powers by spirits who live within them, have the power to heal, to determine the meaning of signs, and to communicate with spirits. Fees are paid to these practioners by their clients.

Rituals connected with a cult of ancestors are carried out by the heads of extended family households. Other rituals mark the time of planting and the lunar new year.

### Other Groups

The ethnic groups represented by small communities (Man, Akha, Lolo, and Lahu) share with their neighbors a belief in a wide range of active spirits, although the names, attributes, and loci of these spirits vary. The Man and the Akha also have a significant ancestor cult. That of the Man resembles the ancestor cult of the Chinese. The ancestors are venerated, particularly at a ritual occurring at the time of the lunar new year. Among the Akha, however, the spirits of the ancestors are assimilated to the other spirits and, like them, are active in controlling the affairs and behavior of men.

As among the other people of Laos, spirits are the providers of good harvests and other good fortune, but some are responsible for illness. All of these people have ritual specialists who are concerned chiefly with healing and divination. The Man apparently have a system of ranked priests, who achieve their rank through examinations. The lowest ranked priest is simply an exorcist of evil spirits; the next rank is a diviner and may officiate at funerals; and the highest rank has power over all the spirits.

### Recent Developments in the Religion of the Hill People

Christianity had made more headway among the hill peoples than among the Lao or tribal Tai. There have also developed cults among these people in recent times that anticipate the imminent coming of the millenium. It was reported in the 1960s that among the Khmu some have been awaiting the coming of a messiah as part of a cargo cult (see Glossary). The messiah is expected to bring with him all the trappings of Western civilization. Among the Meo a cult of the coming of Jesus Christ as messiah was also reported in the early 1960s. The messiah was anticipated as arriving by jeep and passing out arms and ammunition to the Meo.

# CHAPTER 7

# LANGUAGE, COMMUNICATION, AND THE ARTS

The ethnic diversity of Laos, the problems of communication imposed by the terrain, the multiplicity of languages and the low level of literacy, and the influence of the cultures of the more powerful and populous countries that completely surround Laos have all worked to prevent the development of a cohesive Laotian culture. The Lao people, the biggest single component ethnically, have developed a relatively homogeneous cultural life for themselves centered on Theravada Buddhist worship and a shared language and literacy and artistic heritage. Also, their dominance in the Royal Lao Government gives Lao views and news broad dissemination in government-sponsored public information programs. Lao language and culture do not, however, have much effect or influence on internal developments in the rural enclaves of the minority peoples—the tribal Tai, the Lao Theung, the Meo, the Man, and the speakers of Tibeto-Burman languages. Neither do Lao language and culture dominate the cities, which are predominantly centers of foreign culture—Chinese, Vietnamese, and French (see ch. 4, Social Systems).

Laotian Tai, also called Lao, is the official language, and the government places great stress on its acquisition by all citizens, regardless of their ethnic backgrounds. Perhaps the major means of achieving this objective has been the designation of Laotian Tai as the medium of instruction in all primary schools. Although many minority groups use their own languages among themselves, their children who attend school usually learn the official language and are becoming bilingual.

Widespread illiteracy makes printed materials of minimal effectiveness. The number of newspapers, magazines, and books consequently is small and of limited circulation. Wider impact is exerted by several strategically located government radio stations, which are audible in all parts of the country. There were no television stations in late 1970, but a few motion picture theaters showed predominantly foreign films augmented by some locally produced newsreels and an occasional government documentary.

Traditional news and information carriers—notably itinerant merchants, monks, ballad singers, and drama troupes—have been major information dissemination sources in regions under government control. The civil upheaval and insurgent control of northern areas and along the Laos-Vietnam border in eastern and southern Laos in 1971 generally excluded inhabitants of those areas from government news except that disseminated by radio (see ch.

14, National Defense and Internal Security). To some extent, the cultural exclusiveness of many remotely located ethnic groups has limited the spread of nonlocal information.

For the Lao, despite their origin in southern China, the literature, religions, and art forms of India provided the cultural matrix. The influences of Mahayana Buddhism (see Glossary) and of Hinduism found their way to Laos through Ceylon and the ancient Khmer empire, centered on the site of the modern Khmer Republic (Cambodia). It was, however, the reception of Theravada Buddhism (see Glossary) in the fourteenth century that provided the major source from which most cultural expression has been derived. The introduction of Theravada Buddhism coincided roughly with the founding in 1353 of the ancient Lao state of Lan Xang by the son-in-law of the Khmer king.

The power of the Khmer empire was in serious decline by the fourteenth century, however, and its cultural impact on Lan Xang was limited to the southern areas. A long series of political and military struggles involving Lan Xang, Siam (Thailand), and Burma added another dimension to the country's cultural life. Siamese and Burmese architecture established the basic patterns that would be followed in northern Laos.

French influence seems to have been limited to a small number of Laotians who possessed the requisite economic and social status to pursue higher education in France or Vietnam. The French contribution to Laos artistic and literary heritage was important, however. A number of the country's architectural treasures were restored with French help and, through the efforts of French scholars, knowledge of Laotian culture was made available to the rest of the world.

After independence this responsibility was assumed by a number of the Lao elite, including Prince Souvanna Phouma. Essays and monographs on Laotian literature, music, and language have been made available in French and English.

For most Laotians art, poetry, and song are an integral part of daily life and are especially closely connected with religious worship. Art works are created and valued for their function in religious ritual and other purposes. Aesthetic merit is of secondary importance. Works are created to be used, and little thought is given to preserving them for posterity. The most striking example of the purely functional aspect of art is in the elaborate structures built for funeral pyres. They often involve much work and frequently achieve high levels of artistry but are completely destroyed in the course of the cremation. Even *wat* (see Glossary) buildings and other edifices are often built from such easily perishable materials as wood and stucco.

Art is also used for the embellishment of human activities, for the enhancement of social prestige, and for the adornment of the body. The elaborateness of funeral pyres gauges social prestige, and the amount of jewelry worn by a Laotian woman is an indicator of wealth as well as a device for enhancing her appearance.

## LANGUAGES

### Laotian Tai

Laotian Tai, or Lao, the native tongue of the dominant Lao ethnic group, is the country's standard spoken and literary, as well as its official, language. It is the language of government, education, the press, and the few films that are produced in Laos. Some Mon-Khmer groups have adopted it as a first language, and among non-Lao ethnic groups it serves as a lingua franca.

Like other languages of the Tai linguistic family of which it is a member Laotian Tai is tonal. Many local dialects are often distinguished from one another not so much by differences in vocabulary as by the number of tones they possess and the way they are applied to the same basic syllables.

In all dialects of Laotian Tai a complex vocabulary is used to express fine gradations of respect, deference, intimacy, and humility between speakers of different social status. Separate personal pronouns, for example, are used to apply to the person speaking or to those to whom, or about whom, he is speaking. In some cases, as when speaking to or about royalty or the *sangha* (see Glossary), totally different vocabularies are employed to show proper deference and respect. There are also geographical differences and differences in style based on education and the kind of literary material being produced.

In its written form the Laotian Tai alphabet, which came into existence about the thirteenth century, is in all essentials identical to that used in Thailand. There are several styles or forms analogous to roman, italic, bold face, and similar styles in English, that are preferred variously and irregularly in different parts of the country. The Lu and the Tai Yuan, for example, use characters that are slightly different from those used by the Lao and show Burmese influence, although they stem from the same basic Indic source as the Lao writing. The spelling of the language is not standardized, and there are many variations; there is also no standard way to transcribe the alphabet into Latin letters, so that Lao names may appear in several versions in French or English publications and often look quite different from similar Thai (Siamese) names.

In older literary Laotian Tai there was a large, specialized vocabulary of religious and other technical terms taken from Sanskrit and from Pali (the ancient Indic language in which the sacred books of Theravada Buddhism were written). During the French period new technical terms of French origin began to come into use. Since independence there has been a tendency to adopt technical terms in Siamese adaptations or analogues of words in Western languages.

### Tribal Tai Language and Dialects

The various tribal Tai ethnic groups are linguistically related to the Lao, and their basic language and its many local dialects are of the same general structure as Laotian Tai. Their dialects are mutually intelligible, and the speakers of each can understand Laotian Tai at least partially. In any event, the tribal Tai can learn the official language with ease. Some of the tribal Tai languages have writing systems, usually based on the same Indic source as the Laotian Tai and Siamese alphabets. Few tribal people, however, can read or write, but the number is increasing with the spread of schools using only Laotian Tai.

### Mon-Khmer

The many groups characterized as Lao Theung (also known as Lao Theng or Lao Thung) have no linguistic ties with the Lao, but many have adopted Laotian Tai as a first language. Their native languages are believed to belong to the Mon-Khmer family, although not all have been studied sufficiently to confirm the hypothesis.

The Lao Theung group includes Khmer (Cambodian) speakers and speakers of various languages of the Mon-Khmer family that are also in use in Burma, Thailand, and the Malay Peninsula. Unlike some Mon-Khmer languages, however, the Lao Theung derivatives have not developed writing systems.

### Tibeto-Burman

The Tibeto-Burman languages (Akha, Lahu, and Lolo) have no linguistic ties with Laotian Tai, although both originated in southern China. Tibeto-Burman dialects differ among the groups that speak them, but all are tonal and monosyllabic. The Lolo and Akha peoples each speak a single separate dialect, but the Lahu ethnic group contains several subordinate dialect groups. All three Tibeto-Burman languages spoken in Laos have similarities that allow for fairly easy intercommunication. There were probably under 10,000 speakers of Tibeto-Burman languages in Laos in 1971.

### Miao-Yao

The Meo (Miao) and Man (Yao) have languages that are neither mutually intelligible nor intelligible with Laotian Tai but are regarded as belonging to one language family—the Miao-Yao. This language family has speakers located in the higher altitudes of much of mainland Southeast Asia and southern China. Although writing systems exist in these languages, few Man or Meo are literate. A center in Vientiane run by a Roman Catholic missionary group was reported in mid-1970 to be translating pamphlets on agricultural and social subjects into Meo and to be developing teaching materials to aid in training Meo to read and write their own language and Laotian Tai.

### Other Languages in Common Use

French, once the official language of the colonial power and of all persons participating in the educational and political system of the country, has been demoted to the status of a useful foreign language. In the first draft of a constitution for independent Laos, French was retained as an official language, but this provision was eliminated by later amendment.

All the principal leaders of the country in 1971, however, had been educated either in France or in French schools in Southeast Asia and were accustomed to the use of French in official and technical writing as well as in foreign communications. Also, the lack of adequate technical vocabulary in Laotian Tai has made it necessary to publish many official and technical documents in both French and Laotian Tai. Consequently, in 1971 the use of French remained widespread.

Virtually all persons who spoke French were literate in it, and some were also literate in English and other European languages. Information available in 1971 did not indicate to what extent English was being studied in Laos, but it was offered as a subject in several secondary schools, and there was an increasing number of leaders who knew it in addition to French. Siamese Tai was comprehensible to many Lao, and literate Lao often could read books, newspapers, and other literature from Thailand.

The Chinese and Vietnamese living in Laos use their native languages among themselves. Urban Chinese were at least partly literate in their own language, and most of them knew Lao as well. The Vietnamese in the country were chiefly tradesmen and technicians; some knew French and probably also some Laotian Thai.

## MASS COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA

### The Role of Government

The Directorate of Information of the Ministry of Information, Propaganda, and Tourism is responsible for the control of all news and information disseminated in territory controlled by the Royal

Lao Government. The national Constitution as amended in 1956 deleted direct mention of freedom of speech and of the press. The 1957 press law, however, authorizes freedom of expression, provided the subject matter does not jeopardize the king, the state religion, or the aims of peace, neutrality, democracy, and unity of the nation. In addition, there is an established tradition of free expression that manifests itself in common and forthright criticism of the government and officials.

The situation regarding official censorship of any medium has been ambiguous. Publications of the Lao Patriotic Front (Neo Lao Hak Sat—NLHS), or any other agency opposing the Royal Lao Government, were not specifically outlawed, but neither were they freely obtainable in territory administered by the royal government in the early 1970s. Virtually all printed publications have been produced by the government, as have been all domestic radio broadcasts. Most films in 1971 were imported and, except for a few produced by the government, all were required to display a seal indicating official approval.

In addition to its regulatory powers, the Directorate of Information was authorized to disseminate news and information. Measures to train the relatively small staff at the directorate were in effect, but few of the employees in provincial capitals received specialized training. Their activities were restricted mainly to the vicinity of the towns where they worked.

Other government agencies involved in the dissemination of information included the Armed Forces Information Service and the Special Service for Political Propaganda. The Armed Forces Information Service was organized along military lines, with a central office at army headquarters and a unit in each battalion. Its basic mission was to communicate with military personnel, but its materials also reached civilians in the vicinity of military bases.

The Special Service for Political Propaganda was created in 1966 and placed under direct control of the prime minister. Its original mission at that time was to instruct the people in the duties of citizenship and to counteract communist propaganda aimed at boycotting scheduled elections. Its subsequent activities and relationship to the ministry are unknown.

Both the Directorate of Information and the Armed Forces Information Service have emphasized two basic objectives: encouraging support for the principle of Laotian unity and countering communist propaganda. Stimulating national unity has been difficult because most Laotians fail to conceive of Laos as a nation or a state. Many do not even know the name of the king and think that Laos is a place "somewhere on the other side of the mountain." Government appeals, delivered over the radio and all other media of mass communication, urge the people to maintain traditions against alien influence.

Similar measures involving all media have been used to attack communist ideas and methods. Laotians have a historical animosity toward Vietnamese, and a particularly effective theme has been that of North Vietnamese control of the NLHS and its military arm, the Lao People's Liberation Army (called the Pathet Lao until 1965). Notable efforts are made to reach non-Lao minority groups, which are prime targets of communist propaganda.

### Newspapers and Periodicals

The low level of literacy, the difficulties of distribution, and the propensity of Laotians to place greater reliance on personal contact than on the printed word greatly limited the effectiveness of printed media as channels of public information. Virtually all publications were produced in Vientiane, where most printing equipment was available and where readership was heavily concentrated among the Lao elite and foreign residents. Some copies of the more prominent publications, however, were distributed by air to the provincial capitals.

With the exception of an occasional publication in French and the production of a few Chinese-language dailies, newspapers and periodicals were printed in Laotian Tai. Circulations were small, however—estimated to total fewer than 10,000 in the aggregate in 1971.

In 1971 there was a handful of newspapers published in areas controlled by the Royal Lao Government. Most of these were dailies published in Vientiane. The most prominent and significant publication was *Lao Presse*, issued daily in French (and in Lao as *Khao Pacham Van* ) by the Directorate of Information as the official government daily news bulletin. The bulk of its news was supplied by the government news agency, the Lao Press Agency (Agence Lao Presse), but it also used news released from the various diplomatic missions in Vientiane. Other publications included *Revue de Presse* in French and *Xat Lao* in Lao. Several newspapers were also published in Chinese.

*Lao Presse* usually comprised about four pages, but it also put out, on an irregular basis, special editions of varying sizes, which included pictures and longer feature articles. In addition to domestic and foreign news, the regular editions published official documents and announcements but contained little editorial comment. It was distributed to government personnel and to leading merchants who made it available to the public at no cost. Copies were also flown daily to officials and leaders in provincial capitals.

Other daily newspapers were privately owned and published and were primarily designed to express the viewpoints of their respective publishers, most of whom were prominent political figures. These newspapers ranged in size from two to four pages. They obtained their news from the Lao Press Agency, from foreign radio broadcasts, and from articles in newspapers published in Thailand. Most of them carried a few advertisements and charged a small fee for each copy, but they were financed largely by their publishers or by political interests.

Although most private newspapers supported the government and could generally be called neutralist in outlook, they were sometimes critical of the government and its leadership.

### Radio and Television

As of early 1971 there were sixteen radio stations in operation that supported the Royal Lao Government. These were capable of bringing news, information, and entertainment to all parts of the country. All stations were amplitude modulation (AM) types and were employed wholly in domestic services. Both medium wave or standard broadcast and shortwave bands were used. The mediumwave stations were of relatively low power, and their ranges were quite limited; some of the shortwave facilities, also of moderate power, were clearly audible throughout Southeast Asia, although they did not broadcast materials specifically designed for non-Laotians audiences.

Radio stations were licensed and technically supervised by the ministries of interior and social welfare. Eight stations belonged to the Lao National Radio network, an agency of the ministry; six stations operated under the control of the Royal Armed Forces (Forces Armées Royales—FAR); and two stations, although apparently associated with the military, functioned independently.

The national network of eight stations included one mediumwave and two shortwave stations in Vientiane, two mediumwave stations in Pakse, and two mediumwave stations in Luang Prabang. The location of one station (shortwave) was not known. Although called a network and administered as a single organization, the system was not a true radio chain—its individual stations were not connected by a cable or otherwise equipped for simultaneous broadcast of programs originating at a common base control station. They operated, rather, as separate local stations, each using its own schedule and programs produced by the station itself.

Facilities of the FAR consisted of six stations, which also operated independently of one another. They included two mediumwave and two shortwave stations in Vientiane, one mediumwave station in Luang Prabang, and one shortwave station in Savannakhet. The two independent stations, both shortwave, operated from Sam Thong in Military Region II (see ch. 14, National Defense and Internal Security).

The Vientiane stations of the Lao National Radio network, in early 1971, were broadcasting for about thirteen to fourteen hours a day. Programs consisted of domestic and foreign news; commentaries and speeches by high government officials and local leaders; informational materials on government programs, objectives, and social and economic development projects; cultural and historical subjects of national interest; and both Western and Laotian music. Most programs were in Laotian Tai, but small segments also were in French.

The six stations operated by the FAR had less extensive schedules and were more limited in their output. Their programs were in Laotian Tai and featured military news, information, and music designed to encourage the efficiency and morale of the armed forces. Although their programs were not designed for civilian audiencies, they contained material of considerable interest to the general public because of the fighting with insurgent forces and the impact of the war in Vietnam as it extended to the struggle for control of the Ho Chi Minh Trail. The two independent stations in Military Region II broadcast not only in Laotian Tai but also in the minority languages, including Man, Meo, Black Tai, and some Mon-Khmer dialects.

The Lao National Radio network has been assisted by various foreign aid programs of Great Britain, the United States, Australia, France, and West Germany. An official of the United States Information Service stated in 1969 that in the previous year his agency, on behalf of the Royal Lao Government, had produced, or assisted in the production of, approximately one-third of the year's program-hours.

These various radio stations formed the nation's major communications media for the dissemination of public information from the standpoint of the numbers of people reached. They also were probably the most effective means because of the low level of literacy and the average Laotian's tendency to place greater reliance on the spoken than on the written word.

In 1971 there were an estimated 130,000 to 150,000 radio receiving sets in the country, of which about one-half could receive shortwave transmissions. The government has had a policy of distributing transistor receivers free of charge to inhabitants of remote and isolated outlying regions. Most receivers were owned by officials, merchants, monks, and village headmen who relayed information gleaned from broadcasts to their neighbors and fellow villagers.

There were no television stations or services in the country in

1971. Television programs could be picked up, however, from Khon Kaen and from a relay station at Nong Khai, in Thailand. It was estimated that about 2,000 television receivers were in use in Laos in 1971.

### Book Publishing, Sales, and Circulation

There was little interest in reading in Laos, and publications of all types were considered to be of minor significance. A 1970 source indicated that only about 25 percent of the population was literate in any language, but it did not specify the relative competence of different segments of the population. A survey made in 1968 found that 30.7 percent of the people were able to understand three-quarters of the material on a government form; the functional literacy rate dropped to only 19 percent, however, if the standard was changed to the degree of literacy expected of a fourth-grade primary school student.

A few small private printshops, mostly located in Vientiane and using generally antiquated equipment, occasionally produced pamphlets and leaflets that were used by the government or politicians for information or persuasion. Because of the low literacy rate, these publications were largely pictorial in content.

In addition to the printshops, there were at least three larger publishing houses in Vientiane, two of which were private enterprises. The Ministry of National Education also had a fairly modern photopress that was the major source of Laotian textbooks. The Literary Committee of the ministry had a program to encourage Laotian authors and the publication of their manuscripts and at the same time to foster publishing in general.

The number of books published domestically varied from year to year but was consistently small. Fourteen were printed in 1967; thirty, in 1968; and fifty-seven, in 1969. Fifty-five of those published in 1969 were in Laotian Tai, and two were in French.

In the late 1960s there were some bookstores, chiefly in Vientiane, but they stocked primarily French, English, and Thai books and catered to the foreign nationals living in the towns and cities. Small and appropriately stocked libraries were maintained by the various normal and technical schools and some of the other schools of the Laotian educational system. These repositories were not public libraries, however, and were reserved primarily for the use of enrolled students. The Buddhist Institute in Vientiane also had a sizable library for its students and recognized scholars interested in religion. In addition to these collections, there was also the National Library in Vientiane, located on the grounds of the School of Fine Arts. The collection consists of approximately 9,000 volumes written in French on a wide range of subjects that were chosen for their utility to Laos and presented to the country by the Rockefeller Foundation. The library in 1969 had 850 registered borrowers and circulated approximately 100 books per month. It was by far the largest and best library under Laotian administration.

The Wat That in Luang Prabang has a 5,000-volume collection in Lao and Siamese and circulated about 100 books a month among the Lao-reading public. A school on the secondary level, the Lycée de Vientiane, was the only Laotian school to have a library. There are also said to be substantial collections of rare Pali and Sanskrit manuscripts housed in various monasteries; these circulate without any formal cataloging or control.

There were also a number of foreign libraries. The French Cultural Center, the British Information Service, the United States Information Service (USIS), and the United States Agency for International Development each had libraries in Vientiane as of 1969. In addition, at that time the USIS was maintaining smaller libraries in Luang Prabang, Savannakhet, and Pakse.

In the late 1960s efforts were made to furnish modest library services to rural areas, and several pilot projects in villages and towns were begun. Within two months of its opening in late 1966, one such reading center was receiving from twenty to thirty visitors daily and circulating fifteen books per day. Persons using these facilities included many schoolchildren, businessmen, military personnel, and teachers.

### Motion Pictures

Motion pictures are very popular but are neither numerous nor readily available to the greater part of the population. In 1971, for example, it was reported that the country had only nineteen motion picture theaters, located in Vientiane and the more populous provincial capitals. The price of admission to Laotian theaters was reportedly not generally prohibitive. All showings were well patronized.

The USIS in Vientiane showed information films. It also has employed mobile teams that toured the countryside, showing monthly newsreels, features, and documentaries that often incorporated traditional arts forms. USIS presentations were free.

Local production of motion picture films was extremely low. The Directorate of Information regularly produced newsreels, and two or three private firms produced short feature pictures. In an effort to encourage greater domestic production, the government has sponsored a Laotian film association. Most films, however, had to be imported and came from Thailand, France, the United States, and India. The Indian films were usually religious in theme or based on mythology and had wide popular appeal. Documentary and religious films appeared to have both considerable informational and persuasive potential.

### Other Media

The government has been aware that public speeches and personal conversations are particularly effective means of communicating with the majority of the people. Accordingly, the travel of public figures to rural areas has been emphasized, although transportation difficulties and disturbed conditions make their journeys hard and sometimes dangerous. In regions that were more secure, public meetings, often combined with traditional festivals, have become more common, as have discussions with the people at weekly markets—particularly those of the tribal people.

For centuries monks moving from *wat* to *wat*, boatmen and tradesmen linking towns and villages in the course of business, and ballad singers making the rounds of popular festivals have always been good transmitters of information. In 1971 these traditional news carriers continued to play an important role in making the public aware of what was going on.

The degree of credibility with which people received news and interpretations from traveling monks was somewhat uncertain. Traditionally, the Buddhist monk has been viewed more as a spiritual and philosophical guide than as a worldly commentator, but his social status and access to a radio receiver lend authenticity to his interpretations. The same attitude is held toward news passed on by village headmen. Few traders have been formally educated or have had close contact with persons knowledgeable in the affairs of the capital or the world. Moreover, the news and information they carry sometimes is weeks old, but it is received avidly by persons outside the mainstreams of information flow. The extent of the journeys made by ballad singers and dramatic troupes cannot be determined accurately. Skilled in improvisation, these performers weave the people and events of which they had learned into highly acceptable songs of the traditional sort.

### Information Activities of Antigovernment Forces

The Lao Patriotic Front (Neo Lao Hak Sat—NLHS), aided by agencies of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam) and the People's Republic of China (PRC), issues a steady stream of antigovernment propaganda. Before the NLHS leadership boycotted the Provisional Government of National Union and retired to its own territory during 1963 and 1964, the NLHS and its various front organizations were able to work directly to influence people in the areas controlled by the Royal Lao Government (see ch. 9, Political Dynamics). It distributed communist newspapers and literature freely to monks and other traditional newscarriers and attempted to indoctrinate them and use their information disseminating capacities. Presumably, the same methods and techniques continued to be used in 1971 in NLHS-controlled areas as part of the effort to secure the support of the local population in these regions.

In the early 1970s, however, the principal NLHS propaganda medium was radio. The main effort was through Radio Pathet Lao (RPL), originally established in 1960. RPL claimed in 1971 to be transmitting from a spot in Houa Phan (Sam Neua) Province but was believed by reliable sources, based on electronic checks, to be located actually near Hanoi. At peak periods it was using four shortwave transmitters.

Broadcasts in early 1971 totaled about ninety-four hours a week, on a roughly fifteen-hour daily schedule. Programs included newscasts, commentaries, features, talks, and entertainment. About 70 percent were in Lao; and 30 percent, in Meo, Man, Lave (a Lao Theung language), Khmer, and Vietnamese. A Japanese source reported in 1971 that equipment had been manufactured in the PRC and that RPL had a staff of 300.

RPL programs essentially followed the propaganda line used by Hanoi. They were characterized by several persistent themes. The NLHS was pictured as the heir of the Lao Issara (Free Lao), the movement formed in 1945 to end French colonial rule (see ch. 3, Historical Setting). The Royal Lao Government was declared to be illegal, indifferent to the welfare of the people, and subservient to the United States. The United States was accused of aggression against the Laotian people and was charged with imperialism, warmongering, and corruption. Both the Laotian government and the Western powers were accused repeatedly of violating the Geneva agreements on Laos.

Also broadcasting antigovernment propaganda in 1971 was the Radio of the Patriotic Neutralist Forces (RPNF), which claimed to operate from Khang Khay in Xieng Khouang Province. Indications were, however, that it was utilizing facilities inside North Vietnam. In mid-1970 RPNF was using two shortwave transmitters and broadcasting about twenty-eight hours a week. The language used was Laotian Tai (until 1969 broadcasts were also in Meo). Policy and programs echoed the propaganda line of RPL.

The Information Bureau of the NLHS was officially opened in Hanoi in January 1970. This bureau has distributed pamphlets and paperback publications issued by Neo Lao Hak Sat Editions and printed by the Lao Hak Sat Press. The NLHS itself published an official organ, *Lao Hak Sat*, reportedly in the city of Samneua, and the Lao People's Liberation Army put out a newspaper, *Kongthap Potpoi Pasason*. Both publications were in Laotian Tai.

The Pathet Lao News Agency (Khaosan Pathet Lao—KPL), which has its own radioteletype press service, was believed to be located in Hanoi. KPL has reported that North Vietnam has provided great help in the development of the information services of the NLHS-held territory through the training of Lao technicians and workers.

Communist propaganda has been directed at all elements of the society from the elite to the villagers and from intellectuals to youth groups. Its efforts have put stress on minority groups, both Chinese and Vietnamese urban communities and remote tribes. Local grievances everywhere and the disparity in living conditions between the Lao elite and the minority groups are exploited. The Communists promise to help tribal people "live on an equal footing" and still preserve their cultural identity. Apart from the difficulty of communications as a whole, a major impediment to communist propaganda has been Laotian mistrust of the Vietnamese who are identified with the NLHS.

## INFORMATION FROM ABROAD

Foreign information activities in Royal Lao Government territory include the actual dissemination of information and the provision of assistance to the information effort of the government. The activities of the United States, France, and Great Britain are the most prominent, and all maintain information centers stocked with materials for public use.

French activity has declined since Laos became independent, and its main effort has been to perpetuate French culture. Toward this end, in the 1960s France had a mission of about 300 experts, most of whom were teachers in the public school system (see ch. 5, Health, Education, and Welfare). British efforts are concerned mainly with making materials about British Commonwealth activities and culture available to the population.

The most extensive effort was that of the United States, which, through the USIS, concentrated on relaying information to Laotians about their own country and enlisting their allegiance to it and in providing financial and technical advice to the Directorate of Information. The USIS had a central office in Vientiane. In addition to topical leaflets and posters, the service published a weekly news bulletin in Laotian Tai and English, provided a basic news file to the Lao Press Agency, and distributed a Laotian Tai edition of *Free World*.

About half the radio receivers in the country in 1971 were equipped for shortwave reception, permitting Laotians to listen to the overseas service programs beamed to Southeast Asia. The United States Voice of America (VOA) broadcast about one hour daily in Laotian Tai. The VOA also presented programs in English directed to Southeast Asia, totaling between nine and ten hours daily; the British Broadcasting Corporation had an extensive English-language program aimed at the same areas. In addition, All India Radio broadcast programs in English to Southeast Asia several hours each day.

As of 1971 the Soviet Union's foreign radio service beamed a daily program of about one hour in Laotian Tai to Laos. Radio Peking also had regular broadcasts in Laotian Tai. These broadcasts were concerned chiefly with international affairs. They regularly included attacks upon the United States and such items as communist achievements in the People's Republic of China and communist indoctrination. Radio Hanoi also broadcast in Laotian Tai daily, supporting the NLHS and attacking the Royal Lao Government and the United States. Additionally, in mid-1971 Liberation Radio, a clandestine station, began broadcasting in Laotian Tai to Laos. This station was believed to be part of the communist Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam radio setup.

## THE ARTS

### Architecture and Sculpture

The construction of religious edifices has been the focal point of artistic endeavor in Laos. Most of the ancient buildings, although stylistically connected with the stone architecture of the ancient Khmer empire, were built of perishable materials and have been destroyed by fire, weather, or invading armies. The Siamese sack of Vientiane in the nineteenth century, during which the Emerald Buddha was taken to Bangkok, deprived the country of one of its major historical art treasures (see ch. 3, Historical Setting). The That Luang, a stupa (see Glossary), was spared by the Siamese, only to be later destroyed by invading Chinese. It was restored under the French.

Architectural forms are derived chiefly from the classic styles of Angkor, the capital of the Khmer empire. Cambodian influence, however, was modified by the subsequent Siamese and Burmese domination of the country and was confined to the area of southern Laos. The style of Chieng Mai, a town in northern Thailand that was once a part of Lan Xang, is evident in the steep upward sweep of Laotian *wat* roofs.

It is perhaps in the woodcarving of temple doors, pulpits, and manuscript chests that art in Laos reached its highest level of development. Temple doors are usually composed of highly stylized, elegant human figures standing upright on a more or less mythical, and usually quite fanciful, beast traditionally associated with the personage being represented. These figures are superimposed on a powerful relief of intricately carved foliage. The art is essentially abstract; nature represented in the animals and foliage is stylized almost to the point of distortion. The clear and vigorous rhythm achieved by the deft use of line and color—the carvings are often painted and gilded—give the work remarkable life and vitality, however.

Sculpture—primarily stone, bronze, brick, or wooden figures of the Buddha—has also been heavily influenced by foreign cultures. One source claims that traces of Persian and Greek forms can be seen in some sculpture and woodcarving. Some figures show a strong Cambodian influence in the rigid design of the face and a block treatment of the head. A common image in Lao sculpture is the walking Buddha. The figure is standing and leaning slightly forward and has been carved so that the body appears to be covered by filmy drapery. A trait common to all Buddha images is their serene and contemplative gaze.

Some Laotian bronze statues are remarkable for their size and for a high degree of stylization. The original statue of the Buddha in the Wat Manorum in Luang Prabang was said to have been more than eighteen feet high. It was carried off to Bangkok by the Thai in 1827.

The School of Fine Arts (Ecole des Beaux Arts) in Vientiane is designed to give higher education in the arts but, according to one observer writing in the late 1960s, the activities of the school had as yet made little impact on the cultural life of the nation. The medium of instruction was Lao, but in general Laotians seeking to advance professionally in the fine arts continued to go to France or to other foreign countries.

### Crafts

Weaving is perhaps the outstanding Laotian craft, although basketry, wood and ivory carving, tattooing, silversmithing, and goldsmithing are also practiced. Many of these crafts are considered household arts rather than the specialty of professional artisans. There are, however, villages of specialists in silver and gold work near Luang Prabang, which enjoy royal patronage.

Weaving, a common feminine domestic occupation, becomes an art as Laotians practice it. Scarves, skirts, and other clothing are woven of cotton or silk, often with gold of silver threads in a variety of designs. Skirts are usually of a rather somber color with faint vertical stripes. Gold or silver braid is often used in trimming at the bottom; and a belt of red, at the top. Weaving is an exclusively feminine occupation, and traditionally every young girl is supposed to learn it. As a child she helps turn the wheel and prepare dyes. As a young woman she weaves while being courted. Married, she weaves so that she, her husband, and her children may have the most attractive wearing apparel possible, for Laotians take pride in their appearance.

Carving, in either wood or ivory, in addition to being a major form of architectural decoration, is used to adorn objects in everyday use. Pirogues are handsomely carved for prestige reasons, although no one considers that they should be preserved for posterity. Skills are passed on from one generation to another, but the objects are allowed to disintegrate without regret.

### Performing Arts

Instrumental music holds an honored place in Laos. Musical pieces are usually composed of folksong elements but are frequently important parts of religious ceremonies. The people have no system of musical notation, and muscians, whose skills are primarily the result of aural training and native musical intelligence, play from memory. Compositions are simple and few in number, and their structure consists primarily of the repetition of short musical phrases.

Lao music has a range of seven tones. This range corresponds to the scale of the *khene*, the most popular and distinctively Laotian instrument. The *khene*, a wind instrument fashioned from bamboo, has some of the tonal qualities of both an accordion and a harmonium. The size of the *khene* can vary. It is made by attaching from four to sixteen medium-sized bamboo canes of different lengths together. Other instruments are: the *so*, a two-stringed viol instrument; the *khuy*, a flute; the *nangnat*, a xylophone; and the *khong vong*, sixteen cymbals arranged on a semicircular frame of wood or cane.

There are two types of orchestras; the composition of each is determined by its function. The *seb noi* orchestra is made up of the *khene*, the *so*, the *nangnat*, and the *khong vong*. It functions as a muted accompaniment to choral or solo vocal music. Music for royal or religious processions is performed by the *seb gnai* orchestra, which is exclusively instrumental. It uses a clarinet-like instrument and large drums but no *khene* or string instruments.

The Mon-Khmer peoples are fond of a battery of gongs of different sizes and timbres. They also have flutes, clarinets, xylophones, and single-string viol instruments. Loud music is employed to gain the favor of the spirits when illness strikes a household.

The selection and training of musicians in the country seem to be closely connected with the traditional propitiation of spirits. A musically accomplished male relative will undertake to instruct a young boy in the making and playing of an instrument—for example, the *khene*. The apprentice will make ritual payments to his master, such as silver coins, clothing, and little horns of banana leaves filled with white flowers and candles. These offerings are given in honor of the spirits of the master artisans who passed down their techniques. They also symbolize the gratitude that the apprentice will continue to feel toward his master throughout his life.

When the apprentice has perfected his art, he will set up a small altar in his own house and, without fail on the seventh and eighth days of the waxing and waning moon, will lay a small bouquet and candles on the altar dedicated to the masters. Neglect of this rite is believed to incur punishment from the spirit of the *khene*.

The *khene* maker does not limit himself to his craft; he fishes and works in the fields for his livelihood and devotes his spare time to playing the *khene*. The master *khene* player is very important in ceremonies honoring spirits, who are supposedly seduced by the sweet airs. In playing he is supposedly able to put the world of man in touch with the spirit world.

## Dance and Theater

The *lamvong*, a folk dance usually accompanied by the *khene* in which couples dance around each other with graceful arm movements, but without bodily contact, is popular among the Lao. Laotians also like to watch professional dancers. These dance groups continue the court ballets that were derived from the Indian epic *Ramayana*. The dance is very formal and incorporates many aspects of the ancient Indian and Siamese heritage.

Popular traveling troupes perform traditional dances at pirogue regattas and festivals. Other traditional dances, celebrating or propitiating the spirit world on occasions of death, war, or holiday, are frequently performed by persons who are usually engaged in ordinary occupations but who have been trained in the particular steps and rhythms.

One of the most popular forms of the performing arts among the Lao is the *mohlam*, a folk theater. *Mohlam* performances are of four types. The *mohlam luang* is a musical drama or opera with several performers, sometimes in costume, who in speech and song act out the parts of a play on a stage or against a painted backdrop. The *mohlam khu* is performed by a man and woman who engage in a verbal flirtation involving clever repartee. *Mohlam chote* is performed by two persons of the same sex and is a verbal duel, in which each issues a challenge to the other, such as answering a question or finishing a story the other has begun. In *mohlam dio* there is one performer who sings or narrates. His subject may be morality, politics, religion, communism, or any other subject. This type of performance is commonly used by the government to disseminate information to the people. As in all *mohlam*, the *mohlam dio* employs highly informal, colloquial language, making use of the many opportunities the Lao language provides for play on words. Earthy language is expected by the audience and brings a cheer when used.

In areas controlled by the Lao People's Liberation Army, performing arts are also used for dissemination of information and propaganda. A foreign observer in such an area in 1969 attended an evening gathering at which various persons stood up and improvised verses to traditional melodies. The origin of the song was announced in each case—for example, "Phong Saly Province" or "Meo minority of a certain district"—but the texts tended to consist of political commentaries.

Lengthy plays, epics, religious stories, tales of war and romance, and ancient legends make up the repertory of the more formal Laotian theater. Cambodian and Siamese influence is strong in the drama, which interprets works taken from the *Vedas*, the *Ramayana*, or the *Mahabharata*, all of Indian origin. Some plays of Burmese origin are also produced. Gorgeous costumes and colored lacquered masks provide splendor to the performances.

Shadow plays, in which the shadows of the silhouette puppets are thrown on a screen placed between them and the audience, are popular, as are other puppet plays. In these theatrical forms Chinese and Javanese influences are evident. Despite their foreign origin, however, the puppets represent local types and customs.

### Literature

The country's literary heritage is derived largely from Indic sources. Buddhism dominates the strictly religious literature, but Hindu, even more than Buddhist, traditions permeate secular legends, tales, and poetry. Most of this literary legacy is preserved in written form but is usually presented orally, local variations being introduced or invented according to the inspiration of the performer. Methods of courtship provide young people with an opportunity to excel at recitation. At festivals, "courts of love" are set up in the *wat* courtyard in which, sitting in sex-segregated rows, the boys and girls engage in exchanges of poetry and song to demonstrate interest and affection for each other.

Religious literature is divided into canonical and extracanonical works. Canonical works derive directly from Indian sources. The major formal work is the *Tripitaka*, composed of dogmatics, rules for the *sangha*, disciplines, and sermons of the Buddha. The *Tripitaka* was originally written in Pali, a middle Indian language related to Sanskrit, which is the sacred language of the Theravada Buddhists. It was later transcribed into Tham, a special Lao Sacred language with a script resembling that of Burmese.

The *Jatakam*, a collection of 550 tales of the former lives of the

Buddha in the various cycles of his reincarnation from animal, human, and other forms of existence, is the central core of Buddhist literature. Through oral transmission, it is also the most familiar to the majority of the people. The tales are moral, satirical, allegorical, and comical and are always highly entertaining as well as instructive. The last ten of these tales, called the *Sip Xat,* are the major source for edifying sermons. The *Jatakam* has also been transcribed in Tham. Readers of Tham, which is taught only by the *sangha,* number in the thousands.

Another canonical text, the *Paritta,* consists of Pali verses, to be recited as a litany, recommended by the Buddha as protection against all harm to human life. The sayings have been changed over time, new ones being added presumably to provide against evils and dangers not covered in the original text. Because of this the *Paritta* stands between strictly canonical and extracanonical texts.

Extracanonical literature in Laos has been more adaptive and expressive of particularly Laotian settings and characteristics. The major portion consists of stories about the saints and gods and reflects a large element of Hindu, as well as Buddhist, thought. The Vedic god Indra is particularly popular and is invoked as a providential force to protect the good and punish the wicked. Lives of persons who have achieved a high level of Buddhist sanctity provide a rich source of edifying tales.

Hymns, chants, and "sermon songs" constitute minor religious literature. In all of these, poetry is regarded as a kind of word magic used to expel or cajole recalcitrant spirits. The sermon songs of the Buddhist monks, which developed and flourished in the sixteenth century, were probably an outgrowth of the spiritually mechanistic verse formulas found in the canonical *Paritta.* In these, the old forms persisted, but the content and purpose changed. Thus, whereas the ancient use of verse had been to ward off evil, the sermon songs tended to admonish or instruct the hearer.

Secular literature had its beginning in epics dating from the thirteenth century, but little is known of these works, and in the sixteenth century they gave way to folklore from Indic sources. The classical period of epic poetry in Laos, from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, was characterized by epics that were almost all religious and of purely canonical inspiration. As written verse, they were quite rigid in form, and the rules of Indian poetry were strictly adhered to.

These poems were taken up by minstrels and gradually modified into a more Laotian setting. Both the Sanskrit Hindu epic *Ramayana* and the *Panchatantra* (a collection of animal fables) are popular in Laos, but in the course of time they have acquired distinctly Laotian embellishments. The greatest Laotian poem, one known by every literate Laotian, is the *Sin Xay.* Taken from the

Indic *Pannasajataka*, it has been preserved in its entirety in fifteen chapters and is noted for its philosophical and literary excellence.

The poems and songs popular in twentieth-century Laos are still imbued with strong Brahmanic and Buddhist overtones, but the settings and characters are Laotian. The people are more given to singing than to recitation. Their songs deal with legendary heroes and with love. Some of the verse legends also comment wittily on the discrepancies between social ideals and practices. "Brother Seven Jars," for instance, is full of grotesque and marvelous exploits, through which the laxity of the monks, the naiveté of the peasants, and the avarice of the upper classes are held up to derision.

The witty, rebellious character common in Southeast Asian literature, in Laos known as Xieng Mieng, is very popular in the country. Despite the smiling satire with which his pranks are recounted, neither the existing social order nor the Indian and Laotian heritage is challenged; it is merely gaily and astutely commented upon. All classes of society are touched upon, but certain concepts, such as respect of the servant for his master and the authority of the king, are outside the target area of this satire. Where no such restrictions prevail, however, the wit is biting. This spontaneous comic verse is untarnished by the bitterness that often characterizes Western European social criticism. The difference seems to lie in the fact that the Laotian accepts the failings of his social order as a matter of course.

The most modern Laotian literature is derived from prose novels based on Buddhist writings. The form of the novels, however, was changed to verse in the nineteenth century. The main theme is love, and characters frequently encountered in these romances are a brave hero, a beautiful and faithful heroine, a benevolent magician hermit, and a ferocious giant monster called Yak. The almighty Vedic god Indra acts as a deus ex machina, intervening for the hero's benefit.

These novels apparently are highly stylized and, in them, social structures or relationships are not questioned; rather, man is viewed as a constant, and the various components of existence play around him and affect the conditions of his life but do not actually modify his personal characteristics. There is no development of character as in Western fiction, and events have no catalytic effect. The external situations change, instead of the attitude of the hero toward them, and even the external conditions change only within set limits.

Historical writing consists of anonymous chronicles in Pali. The most famous of these is the *Nilam Khun Borom* (History of King Borom), which relates the history from the foundation of the kingdom of Lan Xang to the end of the reign of Praya Sen in the late sixteenth century. Many of the other Laotian annals were destroyed by the Siamese.

The general level of educational development as of 1971 appeared to have provided for only limited scientific inquiry and research. As the educational system, as well as specialist training, develops, however, application of scientific knowledge to specific problems, such as agriculture and animal husbandry, will probably produce a body of Laotian writing in various scientific fields (see ch. 5, Health, Education, and Welfare; ch. 6, Religion).

# SECTION II. POLITICAL

## CHAPTER 8

## POLITICAL SYSTEM AND VALUES

The Kingdom of Laos, as legitimized by the Constitution of 1947 with later amendments, is a constitutional monarchy with the king as head of state, a prime minister as head of government (assisted by the Council of Ministers), a bicameral legislature, and an independent judiciary. The constitutional monarch in 1971, King Savang Vatthana, was a direct descendant of the royal family of the ancient Lao kingdom of Lan Xang (see ch. 3, Historical Setting). The government continued to emphasize this historic continuity in an effort to instill a sense of national unity among the ethnically and religiously disparate peoples of the country.

The governmental system, organized along a unitary line, was inspired principally by the French model, but it also contained indigenous features. The territorial administrative system installed by the French colonial authority remained but with minor modifications.

In 1971, as in earlier years, two rival governments competed for popular allegiance throughout the country. The Royal Lao Government alone was recognized as the lawful government of the kingdom by foreign states, even by such communist states as the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China (PRC), and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam). These communist nations have, however, simultaneously backed the rival communist-controlled regime of the Lao Patriotic Front (Neo Lao Hak Sat—NLHS) and have supported in varying degrees the NLHS demand that the composition of the current Vientiane government be changed.

The NLHS claimed that it controlled two-thirds of the national territory containing about half the total population. Western sources conceded that perhaps a little more than half of the country's territory and roughly a quarter of the population might be under NLHS control. In the NLHS-controlled area, or "the liberated zone" as the NLHS called it, the Communists and their internal supporters maintained a so-called revolutionary administration (see ch. 9, Political Synamics).

For years the royal government has attempted to develop a feeling of common national identity among different groups in the country. In this effort the government has emphasized the symbols associated with the king and with Buddhism, which is referred to in the Constitution as "the established religion."

The extent to which the government and people of Laos, regardless of political persuasions, have actually measured up to publicly declared ideals of national unity and democracy was not readily ascertainable in 1971. From various indications it appeared that popular identification with a conception of nationhood was still inchoate. This trend was generally attributable to continuing political divisions, unrest, and uncertainty; ethnic and local parochialism; and the difficulty of communications imposed by internal geographical barriers and aggravated by the security situation.

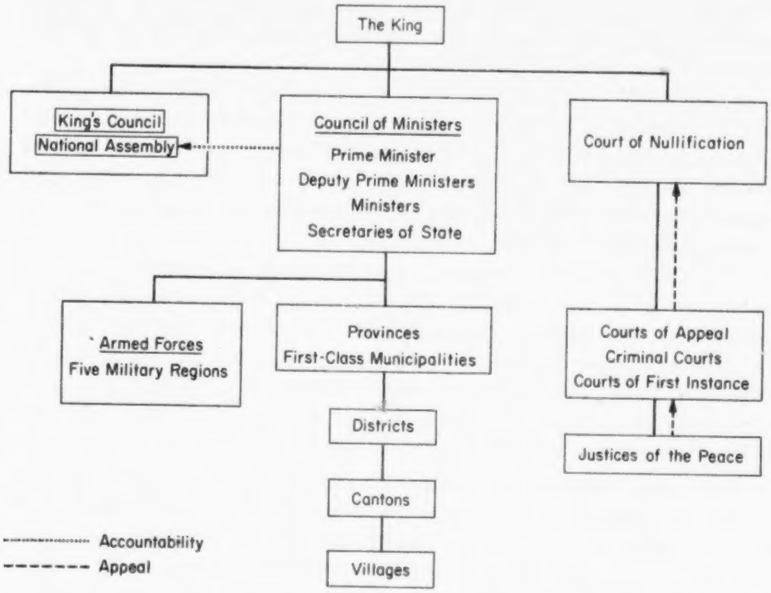
## CONSTITUTIONAL PRINCIPLES

The Constitution of the royal government in force in 1971 was drafted by the Constituent Assembly in 1947 when the country was still under French rule. The draft was accepted by the French and the king and was promulgated on May 11, 1947. It was amended in 1949, 1952, 1956, 1957, 1961, 1963, and 1965—initially to reflect the attainment of full national sovereignty and later to take into account changing political exigencies.

The Constitution proclaims that the country is to be a unitary, indivisible, democratic kingdom and that the nation's "future must lie in the reunion of all the provinces of the country." It guarantees some fundamental rights, such as equality before the law, freedom of conscience, and "other democratic liberties as defined by law." It also prescribes—as civic duties—service to the fatherland; respect for "human conscience;" action promoting national solidarity; fulfillment of family responsibilities; and undertaking work, education, and observance of the laws.

Principles relating to Laotian citizenship and suffrage are embodied in the Constitution. Laotian nationality is automatically conferred by decree on any person belonging to "one of the races" residing in the country and not possessing another nationality. The acquisition or loss of citizenship is to be prescribed by statute. Any citizen of either sex who has reached his majority (eighteen years of age) and who enjoys civil and military rights is eligible to vote and to hold public office under conditions established by law.

The Constitution sets forth the various organs of government and defines their functions and accountability (see fig. 6). A constitutional amendment may be proposed by the King's Council (the upper house of the legislature), the Council of Ministers (the cabinet), or the National Assembly (the lower chamber of the legislature). A proposed amendment is then deliberated by the National Congress, which is composed of the National Assembly and the King's Council and is convoked by the king. Adoption is by a two-thirds vote of members present. The Constitution stipulates that provisions relating to the monarchical form of government, the unitary and indivisible character of the state, the representative nature of the regime, and the principles of liberty and equality are not subject to amendment. The power to interpret the Constitution is vested in the National Assembly.



The King
King's Council
National Assembly
Council of Ministers
Prime Minister
Deputy Prime Ministers
Ministers
Secretaries of State
Court of Nullification
Armed Forces
Five Military Regions
Provinces
First-Class Municipalities
Courts of Appeal
Criminal Courts
Courts of First Instance
Districts
Justices of the Peace
Cantons
Villages
Accountability
Appeal

*Figure 6. Organization of the Royal Lao Government, 1971*

## STRUCTURE OF GOVERNMENT

### The King

The king is titular head of state and commander in chief of the armed forces, and he plays a very significant symbolic role in the country (see ch. 9, Political Dynamics). He promulgates, in the form of royal ordinances, laws passed by the National Assembly as well as ministerial regulations countersigned by responsible cabinet ministers. The king signs and ratifies all treaties when they have been "favorably received" by the National Assembly and may declare war with the consent of two-thirds of the National Assembly membership.

Under exceptional circumstances when the National Assembly is unable to meet, the king may assume legislative power after consulting with the officers of the assembly; however, royal decrees issued under those conditions are subject to "ultimate ratification by the National Assembly." The king's emergency power extends also to the executive domain. During national crises the monarch may directly exercise executive prerogatives or appoint a cabinet of his own choice after consulting the King's Council and National Assembly. When the cabinet, or "the exceptional government" as the Constitution describes it, is appointed by the king, the life of the government must be fixed by the National Assembly; in this instance the parliamentary confirmation of the cabinet is to be dispensed with.

In addition, the king is authorized to establish government positions, civil and military, and make appointments to them according to law. He may also preside over sessions of the Council of Ministers, but this function is rarely performed. The king also exercises the power of pardon and commutation of sentences and confers military and civilian honors.

The Constitution provides for hereditary succession "in accordance with the dynastic rules . . . and the ordinary laws" governing this matter. It reserves the throne for the prince designated as heir by the king or a male descendant of the late king Sisavang Vong. When the king dies without an appointed heir, the choice of the successor is determined by the National Congress from a list of nominees submitted by the King's Council.

If the king becomes incapable of carrying out his duties for any reason, a regent must be appointed by the King's Council. The regent, who must have attained his majority, also may be designated (by the King's Council with the concurrence of the National Assembly) as heir to the throne, provided he is a member of the royal family. Appointment of a regent is mandatory if the king is a minor. During the king's temporary absence from the country or pending designation of a regent, the King's Council meeting in continuous session is charged with carrying out the functions of head of state.

King Savang Vatthana was enthroned in 1959 upon the death of King Sisavang Vong. King Savang Vatthana has designated Vong Savang Vatthana as crown prince.

## The Executive

Executive power is exercised by the prime minister and the Council of Ministers. The prime minister, who is appointed by the king in consultation with political leaders, is president of the Council of Ministers, which includes ministers and secretaries of state (who head major ministerial subdivisions called secretariats of state). The basic responsibility of the prime minister and his council is to implement the laws enacted by the National Assembly. To this end they are empowered to issue decrees and regulations.

Members of the council are selected by the prime minister but, before investiture by the king, approval of the entire council by a simple majority vote of the National Assembly is required. Ministers may be chosen from within or outside of the National Assembly. When ministers are assembly deputies concurrently, they are enjoined from voting on motions of censure or confidence.

The prime minister and the council members are responsible to the National Assembly collectively and individually for general policy and for their own individual actions as well. The National Assembly may force the resignation of the cabinet by a simple majority vote on a motion of censure or of no confidence. On the other hand, under the principle of checks and balances, the Council of Ministers may, with the consent of the King's Council, propose that the king dissolve the assembly. In this case, within ninety days an election must be held to form a new assembly. When the cabinet has received a motion of no confidence, it remains in office in caretaker capacity but is not permitted to introduce any new legislation.

At the end of 1970 there were eighteen ministries and eight secretariats of state. The ministries were: national defense; foreign affairs; veterans affairs and war victims; information, propaganda, and tourism; finance; interior; justice; planning and cooperation; rural affairs; national economy; national education; culture; youth and sports; public health; social welfare; public works; posts and telecommunications; and religious affairs. Secretariats of state were: public welfare; planning (economic planning); public works and transport; veterans affairs; finance; rural affairs; youth and sports; and public health.

The Constitution provides that the prime minister and various ministers may hold one or more ministerial portfolios. Thus, since the early 1960s Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma has been in charge of ministries for national defense, foreign affairs, veterans affairs and war victims, and rural affairs. After November 1970 he was also acting minister of information, propaganda, and tourism.

## The Legislature

The legislature is composed of the National Assembly, which functions as the principal legislative body of the land, and the King's Council, composed of twelve elder statesmen.

### National Assembly

Deputies to the assembly are elected every five years by universal suffrage, except that elections may be postponed for one year in case of either war or national emergency. They are chosen from single-member constituencies but are constitutionally charged with representing the interests of the country as a whole, so that they "cannot be tied by any imperative mandate." Members serving in 1971 were elected in January 1967 and would have to stand for a new election to be held in January 1972.

The Constitution provides that the National Assembly can be dissolved by the king, acting on the request of the Council of Ministers and with the approval of the King's Council. In this event new elections must be held within ninety days, and the new assembly must convene within thirty days thereafter. The threat of dissolution, which jeopardizes the return to office of each deputy, partially offsets the power of the assembly to force the resignation of the prime minister and his cabinet.

The assembly sits in session for five months annually. Special and regular sessions may be convened by the king. At the beginning of each regular session, the assembly elects its own president and vice president and appoints five members to the Interim Committee, which sits throughout the year. In emergencies the committee may legislate, or authorize the king to legislate, subject to later assembly ratification. The Interim Committee provides liaison with the Council of Ministers, whose acts it supervises. The National Assembly has the power to impeach individual ministers for treason or malfeasance.

The assembly, the only body authorized to enact legislation, can act on the national budget and national loans, approve treaties, organize the kingdom politically, and revise legal codes. Bills are usually introduced to the assembly by the Council of Ministers and are passed by a simple majority vote. They may be initiated also by the King's Council or by individual deputies. Laws passed by the National Assembly are sent to the king for royal approval by way of the King's Council, which may recommend promulgation or modification by the assembly but has no power to veto bills. The king is required to promulgate within two months (one month for urgent laws) all measures passed by the assembly; otherwise, the president of the assembly may proclaim it in the king's name.

### King's Council

Although not expressly stipulated in the Constitution, the King's Council (sometimes referred to as the Privy Council) apparently is intended as a sort of upper chamber that has considerable prestige but little power. It consists of twelve members, six of whom are appointed by the king and the rest designated by the National Assembly. Councillors serve for five-year terms and have the same privileges and salaries as assembly deputies. They may serve concurrently as members of either the Council of Ministers or the National Assembly.

The King's Council is empowered to introduce legislation, but its major function has been to advise the monarch on bills originating in the National Assembly. It can review, revise, and remand (but not veto) bills passed by the assembly. Its revisions can be accepted or overruled by the assembly by a simple majority. It may also render opinions at the request of the prime minister or the National Assembly. Under exceptional circumstances the King's Council may function as a high court of justice, usually to try ministers impeached by the National Assembly.

### The Judiciary

The judiciary is based on French juridical principles, incorporating to an extent indigenous practices that were adapted to modern French legal codes. The first formalization of the judiciary took place in 1949, when the Franco-Laotian convention (with its implementing conventions of 1950) established separate jurisdictions for Laotian and non-Laotian citizens of Indochina and for foreigners (see ch. 3, Historical Setting). In 1953 the French transferred all judicial authority to the Royal Lao Government, and since that time all residents of the country, except a small number of diplomats, have been subject to trial by Laotian courts.

The Constitution guarantees independence of the judiciary from executive or legislative interference. It authorizes the establishment by law of a high council of judges for the control and discipline of judges and stipulates that the organization, powers, and jurisdiction of courts are to be established by law.

The formal judicial hierarchy operates on the national, provincial, and district levels. At the village level justice is usually administered by village headmen in the presence of village elders. At the district level civil disputes and misdemeanors are referred to a justice of the peace (usually the district officer), who has extended jurisdiction over all villages within his respective area.

At the provincial level is the first-instance court, which has both civil and criminal competence as well as appellate jurisdiction in cases referred to it by justices of the peace. Five of these provincial tribunals, which are located in Luang Prabang, Vientiane, Khammouane, Savannakhet, and Sedone provinces, are designated as first class and are presided over by a president and two judges. The other courts are designated as second class and have a single magistrate presiding. Both first- and second-class courts have appellate jurisdiction in cases referred from justice of the peace courts and original jurisdiction over lesser criminal offenses. Also at the provincial level (at Luang Prabang, Vientiane, and Pakse) are three criminal courts, each with exclusive felony jurisdiction in several provinces. In the same location as the three criminal courts are three appellate courts, which meet annually for a single session to handle their accumulated docket but which when required may be called into special session by the minister of justice.

At the apex of the judiciary is the Court of Nullification. Sometimes known as the court of cassation, this highest tribunal is located in Vientiane and serves as final arbiter of all nonconstitutional matters. It has no original jurisdiction but on appeal, it reviews the findings of lower courts as needed and adjudicates appeals on questions of law and fact as raised by the decisions of lower courts. The Court of Nullification is composed of a president and four counselors, who act as assessors or lay judges.

## TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION

### Areas Under Royal Lao Government Control

The country was divided into sixteen provinces (*khoueng*) in 1971. They constituted the largest units of field administration. Below the provinces are districts (*muong*), which are subdivided into cantons (*tasseng*), each incorporating varying numbers of villages (*ban*). In common with French administrative practice, the provinces and their administrative arms are subject to a high degree of central government control. During the 1960s the French administrative heritage apparently was modified somewhat according to changing needs, but the nature and extent of modification, if any, were not readily ascertainable in 1971.

Boundaries between and within various administrative subdivisions in some cases have not been fixed precisely. The government has enacted the necessary enabling legislation to facilitate the process of adjustment.

Each province is headed by a governor (*chao khoueng*), who is responsible to the Ministry of Interior. The governor discharges a wide range of responsibilities pursuant to laws enacted by the National Assembly, executive decisions of the Council of Ministers, and orders of the minister of interior.

The governor represents the central government in his province; directs the administrative offices of the province; and exercises supervisory authority over districts, second-class municipalities (Khammouane, Savannakhet, and Pakse), urban centers (Xieng Khouang, Saravane, Attopeu, Muong Luong Nam Tha, and Sayaboury), cantons, and villages. In addition to his supervisory power over the provincial police and local militia, the governor is responsible for both the operation and coordination of all provincial activities of national ministries. His role actually is limited to coordination because ministerial representatives report directly to their home offices for operational guidance. Many national ministries are represented at the provincial level by provincial service chiefs, who are provided with a staff to carry out their functions. Some ministries also maintain regional administrations independently of the provincial governments, for example, in customs and revenue services.

Although the governor is granted executive independence, such independence is more nominal than real in the absence of taxing and spending authority of his own. Only the prefects of first-class municipalities (Vientiane and Luang Prabang), whose status is the equivalent of a governor, are able to exercise some executive independence with their small independent budgets. All expenditures in a province emanate from the national budget and are allocated periodically to the governor in lump-sum obligations called "delegations." All expenditure requests against these funds by the provincial services must be approved and certified by the governor before disbursement.

In 1971 provincial governors were assisted by two bodies—the provincial consultative councils, established in 1949, and the provincial administrative councils, established in 1961. These councils correspond roughly in embryonic form to a provincial legislature and cabinet, respectively. The consultative council is essentially an advisory body on administrative matters. Some of its members are ex officio; some, appointed or elected; and some, invited. Subject to explicit restrictions of national law, the council may act on intraprovincial boundary changes, establishment of administrative posts, use or requisitioned labor, and any other matter authorized by statute. The administrative council, whose members are ex officio, is created for the purpose of strengthening the governor's control over provincial service chiefs and of curtailing the provincial service chiefs' habit of operating without reference to the governor.

The district is composed of several cantons and is the smallest territorial area administered directly by a central government civil servant, the district officer (*chao muong*). This officer, appointed by the king, is designated by the provincial governor with the approval of the Ministry of Interior. Generally seven or eight districts constitute a province.

The district officer stands on the lowest level of central government authority and thus serves as the most important link between the government and the people. With few exceptions, his responsibilities parallel those of a provincial governor. He is assisted by a district administrative council that performs functions similar to those of the provincial administrative council.

The district officer's duties are extensive. He is the chief executive and also exercises judicial power as the justice of the peac[illegible]e is responsible for ensuring the execution of regulations emanating from the provincial governor as well as the maintenance of law and order through the district branch of the national police (see ch. 14, National Defense and Internal Security).

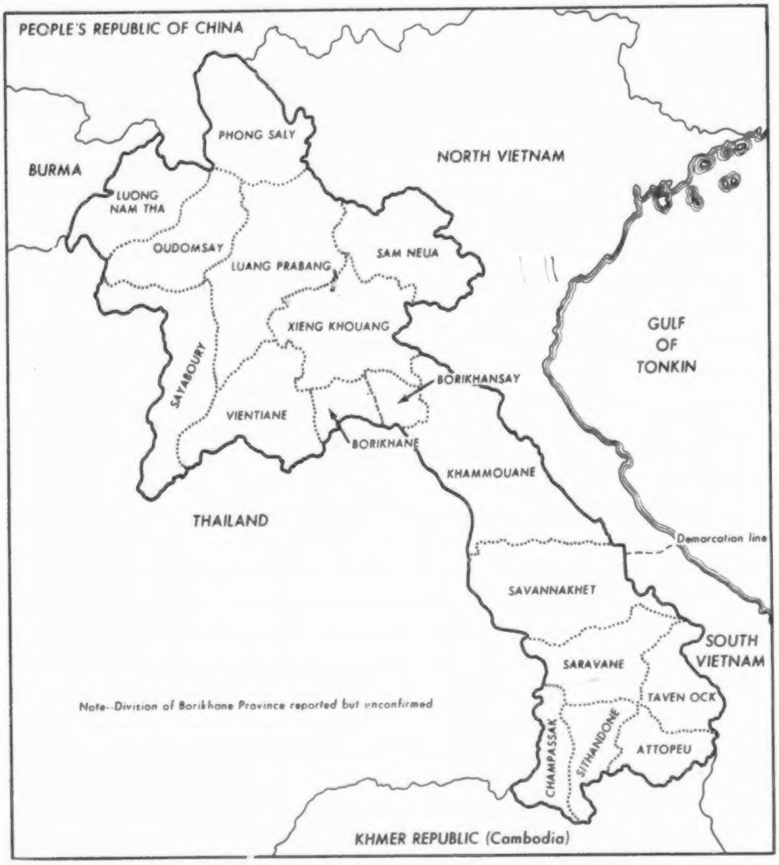
The canton is usually of ancient and traditional origin. The chief of the canton [*nai tasseng*] is elected by the village headmen within the canton. The village headmen themselves are chosen by the heads of the village households to serve for life or until retirement. In matters of order, general administration, public works, or services of national interest, canton and village chiefs serve as agents of the central government subject to immediate supervision by the district officer. Administrative matters or public works of purely local concern are usually reserved for these chiefs in keeping with the tradition of their local autonomy.

### Areas Under Lao Patriotic Front Control

In 1971 roughly two-thirds of the country's territory reportedly was under the control of the Lao Patriotic Front (Neo Lao Hak Sat—NLHS). Indications were that this control was firm in the border areas adjoining North Vietnam and the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam) and throughout the provinces of Phong Saly and Houa Phan (Sam Neua), in most of Houa Khong (called Luong Nam Tha by the NLHS), and in much of Luang Prabang and Xieng Khouang provinces. In the southern panhandle, a border area contiguous to part of South Vietnam was being administered by the NLHS as a separate new province called Taven Ock, carved out of the hilly eastern half of Saravane and part of Attopeu provinces.

Although generally maintaining the administrative subdivisional pattern of the Royal Lao Government, the NLHS has also made a number of other changes at the provincial level. The number of provinces has apparently been increased to seventeen. Northwestern areas of Luang Prabang have been detached and designated as Oudomsay Province, and there are indications that Borikhane may have been subdivided into two provinces; the western portion retained the name of Borikhane, and the eastern half was named Borikhansay (however, firm confirmation of this division was not obtainable in 1971). Vapikhamthong has been incorporated into Saravane, and Sedone has been eliminated—areas of it became part of Champassak and Sithandone provinces (see fig. 7).

The NLHS asserts that it has established "revolutionary administrations," or executive committees, in all provinces. Under the directions and control of the Central Committee of the NLHS, these committees are modeled on North Vietnam's "administrative committees" (see ch. 9, Political Dynamics). In the "fully liberated zone," the committees extend downward to district, canton, and village levels. Members of provincial and district committees are


PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA
BURMA
PHONG SALY
NORTH VIETNAM
LUONG NAM THA
OUDOMSAY
LUANG PRABANG
SAM NEUA
XIENG KHOUANG
GULF OF TONKIN
SAYABOURY
BORIKHANSAY
VIENTIANE
BORIKHANE
KHAMMOUANE
THAILAND
Demarcation line
SAVANNAKHET
SOUTH VIETNAM
SARAVANE
Note--Division of Borikhane Province reported but unconfirmed
TAVEN OCK
CHAMPASSAK
SITHANDONE
ATTOPEU
KHMER REPUBLIC (Cambodia)

Source: Adapted from Arthur J. Dommen, *Conflict in Laos: The Politics of Neutralization* (Rev. ed.), New York, 1971, p. 309.

*Figure 7. Provinces of Laos, as Defined by the Neo Lao Hak Sat, 1971*

appointed by the Central Committee of the NLHS, and those of lower committees are either appointed by the provincial committees or "elected," depending on the internal security of a given locality. Large numbers of the former population of these provinces are now living in the Royal Lao Government-controlled areas in a refugee status. They vote for representatives from their former home districts in National Assembly elections.

## CIVIL SERVICE

Most educated Laotians seek positions in the government service. To many, a career in government commands prestige as well as an opportunity to acquire wealth. In theory, any Laotian citizen over eighteen years of age may be appointed to public office. In practice, requirements of education and experience have limited the opportunity mostly to the French-educated elite; in 1971 this group held practically all of the high-ranking posts in the civil service as well as political offices. Most of this elite came from fewer than twenty princely clans, ranging from the collateral royal lines of Luang Prabang to the royal lines of formerly independent or tributary principalities (see ch. 4, Social Systems).

Because of the shortage of persons capable of operating most technical services at the time of independence, French experts continued to fill regular civil service positions or acted in advisory capacities. United Nations French-speaking experts from such countries as Belgium, Canada, and Switzerland also were used in similar civil service capacities. (During the colonial period many civil service positions had been filled by Vietnamese.) By 1971, however, virtually all executive government departments were headed by Laotians; and policymaking positions in ministries with larger staffs, such as finance, were usually occupied by members of the Lao elite, who also formed a high proportion of the staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Over half of Laotian wage and salary earners were employed in the civil service or in the United States Agency for International Development facilities in the country.

The principal civil servants with whom villagers have any contact are the district officers, who are sometimes feared because of their alleged authoritarian attitudes. These officers are also reported to be distrusted because of irregularities in the civil service. Western observers have pointed out that the maladministration and inferior training of civil servants have become apparent to the villagers in connection with the handling of United States aid programs at the lowest level.

## ELECTORAL MACHINERY

The country is divided into fifty-nine single-member electoral districts. Suffrage is extended to all citizens who have been resident in the country five years and enjoyed civil and military rights. The procedures and qualifications for election of National Assembly members are determined by the election law. Candidates may file as early as seventy-five days but not later than forty-five days before the election. They must resign any government job at least forty-five days before a scheduled election. A defeated candidate must wait one year after the election before he may be employed or reemployed by the government. The official campaign period is forty days but, because electoral lists are not posted until thirty days before election day, active campaigning usually begins at that time.

An electoral law enacted in 1960 raised the educational and background experience qualifications for candidacy and required a deposit that would be forfeited if the candidate failed to poll at least 20 percent of the votes in his district. The law also redrew electoral district boundaries, splitting up constituencies that previously had voted for NLHS candidates.

The first nationwide election in the country was held in 1947, before independence, to elect delegates to the Constituent Assembly but, because of unsettled conditions, voting was restricted to the larger towns. The first general election after independence for National Assembly delegates was held in 1955. This election was boycotted by NLHS elements but, on the basis of subsequent agreement among political groups, supplementary elections were held in May 1958 to fill twenty-one seats in the National Assembly allocated to NLHS-controlled territory (see ch. 3, Historical Setting). The general elections took place in 1960 and in 1965, but in the latter contest the franchise was limited mainly to officials and village chiefs in areas under royal government control. These two elections were declared illegal by the NLHS. Another general election was held in 1967 to elect a new National Assembly after that body was dissolved in 1966. This election was based on universal adult suffrage. The NLHS again refused to take part in this election, but refugees from the NLHS-controlled areas were permitted to vote in the 1967 contest (see ch. 9, Political Dynamics).

## POLITICAL VALUES AND ORIENTATIONS

Political values or ideals are generally expressed in Laos in formal documents or, on state occasions, in terms of national solidarity, fidelity to the king, the sanctity of Buddhism, equality before the law, democratic liberties, vaguely defined "historical traditions," compromise, and morality. Another frequently invoked value has been the principle of noninvolvement in ideological or power conflicts of foreign states. Awareness of these abstract categories is limited to the politically articulate, educated few in urban areas. For the great bulk of the people, these generalities are matters of little practical concern. Their foremost concern is to go about their accustomed activities in peace.

Nevertheless, growing numbers of people have become conscious of political symbols outside their immediate confines of villages or tribal settlements, largely because of the strains of a civil war that has gone on intermittently for more than twenty years. Their allegiance has been solicited from both sides of the armed conflict—the Royal Lao Government and its adversary, the NLHS. Massive displacement of villagers from war zones has disrupted the lives of many thousands of people. In addition, the expansion of development and public service projects has helped to broaden popular horizons and to raise the level of expected services from the royal government and perhaps from the NLHS regime as well.

Political orientations of the people vary considerably according to ethnic affiliation and proximity to towns and communications lines. In 1971 most people continued to identify more strongly with their families, villages, or tribes than with the country as a whole; this pattern was especially apparent in the countryside and in the inaccessible sections of the country. Moreover, certain ethnic minorities, often those having a relatively high degree of internal cohesion and pride in their traditions, have shown reticence toward being incorporated into the political, social, economic, and cultural system dominated by the ethnic Lao (see ch. 4, Social Systems). They have resented what they consider to be the indifference of government officials toward their less affluent circumstances, these officials being identified for the most part with the ethnic Lao. Thus, criticism of the ethnic Lao has tended to shade over into criticism of the royal government, a potential source of alienation. In the northern provinces, where the Lao are a minority, the NLHS has exacerbated ethnic tensions and stirred up various minorities to a greater awareness of their ethnic distinction in an attempt to intensify disaffection toward their traditional lowland Lao overlords (see ch. 9, Political Dynamics).

Many people retain to a considerable extent their traditional acceptance of elite rule. This pattern appears to be responsible for the people's tendency to slight their own competence to govern and for the lack of assertiveness to participate in the political process. The constitutionally established principles of popular sovereignty and universal adult suffrage lack the support of custom and tradition and have had minimal effect. For most citizens voting has been a formality, and few persons understand that their ballots are designed to procure for them a responsible representative at the distant capital.

## IMAGES OF NATIONHOOD

Only members of the Western-educated elite have a definable concept of the country as being juridically organized and having sovereignty. They consider the current dynasty, which descends directly from the kings of Lan Xang, to be the country's foremost source of pride. They prize the monarchy more highly than any other political institution and see in the king some sanction for the continuation of their social, economic, and political preeminence. They portray the ancient Lao empire of Lan Xang as a golden age and the modern state as its successor, and their efforts to foster a sense of common nationality are focused on perpetuating many legends depicting the glories of Lan Xang.

The common people, especially members of minority groups, have little concept of the state or knowledge of the king. In fact, most people have no notion of their country's territorial extent, and many cross back and forth over international boundaries without realizing it. Although some form of relationship with the central government has been developing, few people in the countryside are acquainted with regions of the country other than the one in which they live. Most people also have little knowledge of the rights and duties of citizenship.

Integral to the conception of the state and the nation is the popular tendency to associate Theravada Buddhism (see Glossary) with polity. This faith is a source of pride for almost all of the ethnic Lao. Not even the Laotian Communists have objected to Buddhism being extolled as the state religion. Rather than calling for the elimination of Buddhism or the monarchy, the NLHS proposes a vaguely defined social revolution, specifically to build a "people's democratic national union administration" and to eliminate "all forms of monopoly and exploitation by the ruling circles who are lackeys of the United States imperialists" (see ch. 9, Political Dynamics).

## NATIONAL SYMBOLS

The national emblem is depicted as a red flag, with a three-headed white elephant standing on a five-step pedestal in the center, under a seven-layered white parasol. The elephant represents the ancient kingdom, Muong Lan Xang Hom Khao, or the Land of the Million Elephants and White Parasol, divided into three principalities that were later unified. The white parasol symbolizes the monarchy. The stairway stands for the five main principlies or commandments of Buddhism (see ch. 6, Religion).

The royal emblem, as distinguished from the national emblem, includes a three-headed elephant, two white parasols, a halo above a golden urn above the elephant, and two golden cups. The elephant stands for the ancient Lan Xang empire; the white parasols represent the king and queen; the golden urn and halo symbolize Buddhism "lighting the way to happiness"; and the two golden cups represent prosperity.

The national anthem, *Xat Lao* (Lao Nation). said to have been written in 1943 by Thongdy Sounthone Vichit and Maha Phoumi Chittaphong, is symbolic of the recrudescence of Laotian nationalism and patriotism since World War II. Unity is a principal theme of this anthem that runs:

Our Lao race had once known in Asia a great influence.
Lao people were united and loved one another then.
Still today they know how to love their race and their land and unite behind their leaders.
They have preserved the religion of their forefathers and know how to defend their territory.
They will never allow any nation to invade or occupy their fatherland.
Whosoever wishes to invade their country will find them determined to fight till death.
United they know how to recover the past glory of Lao blood and help one another in happy as well as crucial days.

# CHAPTER 9

# POLITICAL DYNAMICS

In 1971, as throughout much of the 1960s, the country's major political factions agreed on the importance of national unity, independence, neutrality, democracy, and prosperity. Beyond their consensus on these fundamentals, however, they differed sharply on the mechanics of achieving these goals. Their differences were complicated and sharpened, moreover, not only by their own conflicting power ambitions but also because of the impingement of external variables on internal political processes (see ch. 10, Foreign Relations).

The country's three major political factions—rightist, neutralist, and leftist—were divided into two major rival blocs. On one side was the coalition of neutralist-rightest groups under Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma. Opposing this coalition on both political and military fronts was the leftist or communist-led Lao Patriotic Front (Neo Lao Hak Sat—NLHS), which was headed by Prince Souphanouvong, the prime minister's half-brother.

Of these factions, the rightist group favored a foreign policy of active alignment with Thailand and the West and an unremitting struggle against communism while the NLHS strove not only to extend its political and military influence at the expense of the neutralist-rightist coalition but also to strengthen fraternal relationships with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam) and its other communist allies. For its part, the neutralist group sought national reconciliation as well as a foreign policy of nonalignment and neutrality so that Laos would not become an object of foreign power rivalry.

In terms of national modernization and economic development, the rightist and neutralist groups both agreed on a gradualist and parliamentary strategy with strong emphasis on education. In contrast, the NLHS stressed a more accelerated economic development focused on the elimination of "all forms of monopoly and exploitation by the ruling circles who are lackeys of U.S. imperialists." Corollary to this approach was the continuing emphasis on mass mobilization tactics.

For years efforts by both sides to reach a mutually acceptable reconciliation were deadlocked over the question of whether or not political power in Vientiane should be redistributed according to what the NLHS called "the realities of the present situation" in Laos. The NLHS argued that the country's tripartite coalition cabinet—originally formed in 1962 by the nation's three major political groups (rightist, neutralist, and leftist)—should be reorganized because neutralist Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma had defected to the rightist camp and thereby had destroyed the legal basis of the coalition government.

On the other hand, the prime minister's royal government maintained that the tripartite arrangement was still essentially intact despite the withdrawal in 1963 and 1964 of NLHS cabinet ministers from the royal government. He repeatedly urged the NLHS to return to Vientiane and to resume participation in the coalition. The NLHS showed no sign of rejoining the prime minister's cabinet and instead was intensifying its military pressure in an apparent effort to increase its political influence.

Another principal complication was the disagreement between the two sides on the framework within which political negotiations could start. Whereas the Vientiane administration called for an immediate, unconditional opening of talks, its NLHS counterpart insisted on the total cessation of United States aerial bombing throughout Laos as a major precondition. Both sides at different times advanced their own proposals for partial cease-fires in the Plain of Jars area to permit negotiations, but as of 1971 none of these initiatives had succeeded.

Political activities in 1971 generally still remained the concern of a small number of educated, more affluent persons, mostly in urban areas. Power holders were in most cases members of the dominant ethnic Lao, but the leadership structure in the NLHS areas appeared to be more broadly based ethnically. The extent of popular participation in the political processes was still limited, mainly because the processes themselves were going through a formative stage. Political parties, especially in the royal government zone, were little known popularly outside the city limits of Vientiane; they had no grassroots organizations, and their leaders were concerned more often than not with promoting their individual interests. From sketchy indications, the level of politicization was relatively higher in the NLHS zone because of the all-pervasive influence of well-indoctrinated cadres at work in nearly every sector of organized life.

## FRAMEWORK FOR POLITICAL COMPETITION

The Laotian political processes continued to be affected by three principal controlling factors. These were the continuing disagreement among political contenders on the basis for mutual reconciliation, the inseparability of internal politics from the Vietnam conflict, and the elitist character of political participation.

During the 1950s political competition was generally between the rightist and leftist groups, but after Kong Le's coup in 1960 against the incumbent rightist government a third political force—the neutralist—emerged whose aim was to prevent the country from drifting toward the extremes of either the right or the left in both domestic and external matters (see ch. 3, Historical Setting). Eventually, a three-way alignment was formalized in June 1962 in the form of a tripartite Provisional Government of National Union (see table 3). Political strife in the early 1970s, as it was in the latter half of the 1960s, was focused essentially on the question of whether or not the tripartite system of rule, or "tripartism" as Laotian politicians called it, should remain the basis for a new political settlement.

## Tripartism

Tripartism became a basis for political unity first in June 1961 when the three princes, Souvanna Phouma (representing the neutralist group), Boun Oum (the rightist group), and Souphanouvong (the leftist group), met at Zurich in order "to discuss the problem of achieving national accord by the formation of a Government of National Union." As a result, they pledged, among other things, to preserve the unity, neutrality, independence, and sovereignty of the nation; to bring about the unification of the armed forces of the three parties into a single national army; not to join in any alliance or military coalition; not to allow the establishment of any foreign military base on Laotian territory; not to allow any foreign interference in the internal affairs of Laos and to require the withdrawal from Laos of all foreign troops and military personnel; not to allow any foreign troops or military personnel to be introduced into Laos; and to accept direct and unconditional aid from all countries wishing to help Laos develop a viable economy (see Appendix). Finally, the princes also agreed that the government would be a provisional one and would include "representatives of the three parties."

The Zurich agreement on those provisions concerning domestic politics was translated into action finally in June 1962 when the same princes met on the Plain of Jars and decided to form the provisional government under the prime ministership of Souvanna Phouma, with Prince Souphanouvong and General Phoumi Nosavan, a rightist, acting as deputy prime ministers. Apart from reaffirming their intention to "conform strictly to all provisions of the Zurich Communiqué," they concurred that all decisions of the provisional government would be made "according to the rule of unanimity." The distribution of cabinet posts as agreed to at that time showed Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma's group with eleven portfolios (four of which were held, however, by a dissident faction calling itself "the rightwing neutralists"), the rightist group with four, and the leftist group with four.

*Table 3. Prime Ministers of the Royal Lao Government, 1947-71*

| Date | Prime Minister | Remarks |
|---|---|---|
| Mar 1947 - Mar 1948 | Prince Souvannarath | The Constitution was promulgated in May 1947. |
| Mar 1948 - Feb 1950 | Prince Boun Oum | ...... |
| Feb 1950 - Oct 1951 | Phoui Sananikone | The leftist Free Lao Front was organized in mid-1950 with North Vietnamese guidance and support. |
| Nov 1951 - Oct 1954 | Prince Souvanna Phouma | Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities in Laos (July 20, 1954). |
| Nov 1954 - Feb 1956 | Katay D. Sasorith | General elections in December 1955. |
| Mar 1956 - July 1958 | Prince Souvanna Phouma | Supplementary elections in May 1958. The first government between Prince Souvanna Phouma and Prince Souphanouvong (November 1957 to July 1958). |
| July 1958 - Aug 1958 | Prince Souvanna Phouma | ...... |
| Aug 1958 - Dec 1959 | Phoui Sananikone | ...... |
| Jan 1960 - June 1960 | Kou Abhay | General elections in April 1960. |
| June 1960 - Aug 1960 | Prince Somsanith | Coup d'etat by Kong Le in August 1960. |
| Aug 1960 - Dec 1960 | Prince Souvanna Phouma | Because of right-wing military attempt to seize his government, Souvanna Phouma fled to Cambodia in December; whereupon the king issued a decree that Souvanna Phouma no longer headed a legal government. |
| Aug 1960 - June 1962 | Prince Souvanna Phouma | In early 1961 Souvanna Phouma joined Souphanouvong at Khang Khay (in Xieng Khouang Province) and formed a rival cabinet (recognized by India and communist bloc nations). |
| Dec 1960 - June 1962 | Prince Boun Oum | In December the king approved a provisional government formed by Prince Boun Oum as prime minister at Savannakhet; this government was in effect the Revolutionary Committee set up by the right-wing group in September 1960, in opposition to Souvanna Phouma's neutralist government. |
| June 1962 - Mid-1971 | Prince Souvanna Phouma | Tripartite coalition government formed in June 1962, but the leftist NLHS component left the coalition in 1963 and 1964. General elections in July 1965 and again in January 1967. |

The tripartite arrangement was an artificial creation designed to stabilize power relations among these competing groups and, it could be said, the dynamics of Laotian politics were more or less artificially frozen under this formula. As it turned out, tripartism soon proved to be unstable because conflicting power ambitions between and within each of these political groups could not be suppressed for long.

The tripartite coalition reached an untenable point in March 1963 when a small dissident faction within Kong Le's neutralist troops defected to the NLHS. The resulting neutralist-leftist tensions culminated in the departure of two NLHS cabinet ministers (Prince Souphanouvong and Phoumi Vongvichit) in the following month from Vientiane to Khang Khay. Their departure from Vientiane, coupled with the increase in armed attacks on the neutralist-rightist forces by the Pathet Lao forces, brought an end to the temporary political and military truce.

As a result, Vientiane was left in the hands of the neutralist-rightist coalition, particularly after May 1964, when these two groups agreed to unify their respective troops under a single command and to follow a united front against the NLHS. By the end of May 1964 the two remaining NLHS members of the cabinet still in Vientiane had also departed for Khang Khay to reunite with Prince Souphanouvong, who had rejected Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma's repeated urging to return to Vientiane and resume his ministerial responsibility. In the following month, Prince Souphanouvong publicly stated that he would refuse to recognize Souvanna Phouma as prime minister.

As repeatedly asserted by the NLHS thereafter and as recently as 1971, its decision not to participate in Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma's government was based on the argument that the short-lived right-wing military coup of April 19, 1964, destroyed the legal basis of the Provisional Government of National Union as established in 1962. The NLHS claimed that the prime minister had become a pawn and an accomplice of the United States and of its rightist supporters (see ch. 3, Historical Setting).

In late 1968, the NLHS military arm, the Lao People's Liberation Army, started exerting greater and more sustained military pressures against Royal Lao Government forces. The NLHS became increasingly strident in its charges that the Vientiane administration was illegal, assertedly because its form and structure were completely different from the stipulations of the tripartite accords reached in the Plain of Jars in June 1962. It also derided Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma's public declarations that his government conformed to the Zurich and Plain of Jars agreements and that the cabinet posts reserved for the leftist group were left still vacant. The NLHS contended that these "vacant" posts were in effect either eliminated or filled by the prime minister's "acting" appointees.

This NLHS stand was in sharp contrast to its earlier position, publicized in April 1964, when its second national congress adopted an "action program." This program called for the strict implementation of "the Geneva Agreements, the joint communiques of Zurich and the Plain of Jars, and the other agreements." Among other things, the 1964 program demanded that the Provisional Government of National Union be safeguarded, that a unified army and police force be established, and that Vientiane and Luang Prabang be immediately neutralized "so as to make it possible for the National Union Government to resume its normal activities."

These demands, however, were not repeated in "the political program" that the NLHS adopted at a special conference held in November 1968, suggesting that the leftists were no longer interested in the tripartism of June 1962. Instead, the new 1968 program called for the establishment of a more broadly representative "people's democratic national union administration." This new demand was accompanied by a sustained propaganda attack against the Vientiane government. Further, in a memorandum issued in June 1969, the NLHS declared that, although the tripartite settlement of June 1962 was in tune with "the realities of the situation in Laos at that time," "the Laotian problem must be settled on the basis of the 1962 Geneva Agreement and the realities of the present situation" in the country.

For his part, Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma deplored the fact that the continuing war hampered his government's economic development plans, created hundreds of thousands of refugees, and forced the government to divert more than half of its budget to national defense. He pledged that his government would implement a policy of austerity, carry out fiscal reform, bring about economic progress, enforce measures against official irregularities, improve the welfare of the people and, above all, struggle against the NLHS and the North Vietnamese invaders.

At the same time, however, the prime minister continued to express the hope that the NLHS would cease its armed attacks and "return to playing politics" in Vientiane and that a permanent government replacing the current provisional one would be established after the Geneva agreements were effectively implemented and general elections were held. In this connection, he appealed to all signatories to the 1962 Geneva declaration on Laos to carry out their agreements "without waiting for a solution to the

Vietnam problem." He suggested that the Vietnam question would be solved if the Laotian problem was first settled.

### Search for Peace

In 1971, as during the 1960s, neither the Vientiane administration nor its NLHS counterpart was in full control of the various external forces affecting the course of events within the territory of Laos. This situation complicated the attempt on both sides to bring about peace internally. This point was illustrated, for example, in March 1970 when, in response to Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma's repeated call for an early political settlement, the NLHS issued a five-point peace proposal to the Vientiane administration.

The critical relevance of external factors was especially apparent in the first two points of the proposal. The first demanded that the United States should discontinue its military intervention in Laos and "completely cease the bombing of the Lao territory." The second reaffirmed that Laos must not join any foreign military alliance or allow foreign military intervention in any form.

On internal matters, the third point stated that the country should respect the throne, hold free and democratic general elections, and set up a "democratic government of national union truly representing the Lao people of all nationalities." Until the general elections could be held, according to the next point, all political groups concerned should hold a joint consultative political conference and set up a provisional coalition government.

The fourth point also stated that these groups would establish "a security zone" to ensure the normal functioning of the consultative political conference and the provisional coalition government. Finally, the fifth point declared that, pending national unification (based on the principle of equality), the areas controlled by different groups should remain undisturbed and that these groups should refrain from "discrimination and reprisals against those who have collaborated with another part."

Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma offered to open a dialogue with the NLHS about the five-point program but without accepting any precondition. At the same time he called for an immediate, unconditional cease-fire and the withdrawal of North Vietnamese troops from Laos. Beginning in July 1970 a series of informal preparatory exchanges took place between the prime minister and the NLHS, but without any concrete results. These exchanges were made possible apparently because the NLHS softened its earlier position demanding a total United States bombing halt to one that did not make the bombing halt an absolute precondition to the opening of talks; the NLHS now demanded that the bombing be halted only in the provinces of Houa Phan (Sam Neua) and Xieng Khouang.

Proposals and counterproposals still continued intermittently in 1971. Prince Souphanouvong continued to insist on the cessation of all bombing throughout Laos but failed to mention anything about the presence of North Vietnamese troops in Laos. Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma, for his part, maintained that the bombing halt was contingent on the withdrawal of North Vietnamese troops from Laos, except possibly from the Ho Chi Minh Trail, hinting that the North Vietnamese use of the supply route complex was tolerable to his government if Hanoi's troops were withdrawn from other parts of the country, including the Plain of Jars.

### Elitist Politics

Politics in Laos remained the preserve of only a handful of persons holding key positions in the Council of Ministers and, to a lesser extent, of those elected deputies in the National Assembly. The thrust of partisan competition was to secure key cabinet posts through political manipulations of coalitions; these occurred more often than not outside the National Assembly. General elections held every five years provided a channel through which mass-based partisan competition could take place, but in actuality political activities were affected for the most part by such noninstitutional factors as personal popularity, family connections, or regional affiliations.

Beginning in December 1955, when the country's first general elections were held, adults over the age of eighteen (women were not allowed to vote until the 1958 supplementary elections) went to the polls from time to time to register their choice of candidates to the National Assembly. These elections, however, had very little impact on the manner in which real political power was exercised in Vientiane or on the direction of national politics. Political parties behaved more like political clubs or pressure groups catering to special interests; they seldom provided the link between the government and the people, nor did they attempt to enlist popular support on the basis of issues or alternative programs. The outcome of general elections was usually predictable. To the illiterate villagers, party labels or abstract issues meant little, and the voters usually elected those candidates whose names were most familiar to them. These candidates were in most cases locally prominent members of princely clans or members of wealthy commercial houses.

The nearly two decades of intermittent internecine war and the alterating cycle of advance and retreat between opposing troops in the country also prevented many of the people from becoming involved in affairs not immediately relevant to their daily pursuits. The lack of security fostered a climate of fear and uncertainty, making it difficult for many of the people to identify themselves with either the Royal Lao Government or with the NLHS.

Efforts to politicize the masses and to weld together a structure of enduring popular loyalties by the royal government and presumably by the NLHS as well were also severely hampered by divisive forces stemming from other longstanding problems. Roughly 75 percent of the population was illiterate, a factor that militated against any governmental efforts to develop a set of common national purposes and attitudes. Other complicating factors were the traditional tensions between the various minority groups of the highlands and the dominant lowland Lao; the inadequate transportation and communications system in most parts of the country; the mountainous topography inhibiting interregional mobility, especially between the north and south; and the nation's generally underdeveloped socioeconomic infrastructures (see ch. 2, Physical Environment and Population; ch. 4. Social Systems).

Consequently, the politics of mass participation as the term is commonly understood in the West had yet to take firm root. Opportunities for political advancement remained still generally limited, unless political aspirants were members of aristocratic families, were independently wealthy, or had high positions in both civil and military bureaucracies.

## POWER STRUCTURE

Political power was acquired and legitimized in theory by constitutional devices, including the king's appointment of a prime minister and his cabinet ministers and general elections held every five years to choose a new National Assembly, unless the assembly was dissolved sooner by the prime minister (see ch. 8, Political System and Values). Actually, these devices were more nominal than real since the country's power structure, in the years after independence, was shaped by factors extraneous to these constitutional processes.

There were two rival centers of political power: one was located in Vientiane, the constitutionally established seat of the internationally recognized Royal Lao Government of neutralist Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma; and the other was at Samneua, the capital of the communitst-dominated NLHS administration. The royal government's authority and influence appeared to be relatively stable in the more developed and more populous lowlands along the Mekong River, whereas generally in the less developed and sparsely populated mountainous parts of the country the NLHS claimed a firm mandate. Within the Royal Lao Government area political power was divided also along northern and southern regional lines.

In the Royal Lao Government-administered territory power was concentrated in the Council of Ministers or cabinet. Headed by Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma, the cabinet in 1971 was in theory a coalition of the neutralist, rightist, and leftist groups but actually represented only the first two of these groups, a situation that was challenged by the dissident, leftist NLHS. The prime minister owed his political eminence to a combination of several fortuitous circumstances. He was of princely origin (a cousin of the late King Sisavang Vong—as was his half-brother, Prince Souphanouvong); he played a leading role (with Prince Souphanouvong, among others) in the country's first independence movement (in 1945) called the Lao Issara (Free Lao); he was the nation's foremost proponent of national reconciliation through a centrist course in both internal and external matters; and he was reported to be a gifted negotiator and arbiter in balancing the interests of the few regionally rooted ruling clans.

More importantly, the prime minister's neutralist foreign policy had the support of the United States and the Soviet Union, although the Soviet government simultaneously backed the rival NLHS administration (see ch. 10, Foreign Relations). Moreover, both the country's rightist and leftist groups appeared to accept privately, if only for expediency, Souvanna Phouma's prime ministership as a tolerable alternative to a cabinet under the exclusive control of either a rightist or a leftist leader.

Apart from the cabinet, the king represented a power symbol of considerable importance. Some observers in effect suggested that the king might be more influential than any other political figure in the country, deriving his strength as much from the traditional popular reverence accorded the throne (at least among the ethnic Lao) as from his personal popularity. The authority of the throne was accepted even by the NLHS, which had appealed in the 1960s and in the early 1970s to the monarch to help bring about peace. In April 1971, for example, Prince Souphanouvong formally asked the king to "use his authority to prevent the Thai intervention in Laos and check the United States war of aggression."

Other influential leaders were those who headed the ministries of national defense and finance. Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma officially was in charge of the defense portfolio, but actually the ministry was run by the prime minister's deputy, Sisouk na Champassak, reputed to be the likely successor to Souvanna Phouma. Sisouk was concurrently the minister of finance, and thus his status as the second most powerful political executive after the prime minister was not questioned in Vientiane. In addition to a dozen or so ministers and key generals in Vientiane, the generals in charge of the country's five military regions, the provincial governors (especially in southern Laos), several members of the fifty-nine member National Assembly, and a limited number of senior members of the bureaucracy were also among those who wielded a large measure of influence in the country.

Almost all persons holding high political and administrative positions shared common characteristics. Many of them were descendants of the princely clans of Vientiane, Champassak, Luang Prabang, or Xieng Khouang or of the handful of senior officials who had been in the service of these principalities. A small number came also from prominent families of Khammouane and Savannakhet but only rarely from outlying provinces, such as Phong Saly, Houa Phan, Attopeu, or Sayaboury. With rare exceptions, the political elite was composed of the ethnic Lao.

Power holders in 1971, especially in the Royal Lao Government areas, had attended the Lycée de Vientiane, and many of them had been participants in the Lao Issara movement. Some of them were related by marriage. Ties of kinship or friendship among them were strong. It could, in fact, be said that the more or less homogeneous social background of these power figures had the effect of holding in check the country's diverse and divisive forces.

Among the more prominent regional families were: the Champassak of the south, the most prominent members of which were Sisouk na Champassak and Prince Boun Oum; the Sananikone of Vientiane; the royal family of Luang Prabang; the Insisiengmay of Keng Kok (in Savannakhet Province); the Chounramany of Khammouane (Thakhek); the Voravong of Savannakhet; and the Abhay of Khong.

The cabinet was formed or permuted in such a way as to reflect the changing positions of these powerful regional clans toward one another. Most of these clans stood right-of-center in internal and external policies, and it appeared that, if the Sananikones of the north and the Champassaks of the south could unite solidly against Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma's centrist group, they would more than likely topple the Vientiane administration. Prudence and the fear of resulting chaos, which the NLHS would certainly capitalize on, appeared to be the main reasons for the continued rightist collaboration with the prime minister.

## POLITICAL PARTIES

Political parties were generally inactive, although they were completely free to advocate their respective political programs in seeking to enlist broad popular support. A notable exception to the pattern of inertness was the apparent vigor demonstrated by the NLHS, which was waging war against the rival, royal administration but which was still recognized by the Vientiane administration as a legal party. The NLHS continued to maintain a liaison mission in Vientiane under Prince Soth Phetrasy to serve as a channel of communication between Samneua and Vientiane. That the royal government regarded the NLHS as being different from other Laotian parties was evident, however, in Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma's statement in June 1971 that the NLHS was "a minor political party" that was not supported by the Lao people and that it would have "disintegrated long ago. . .if it had not been aided by some big foreign powers."

Among the neutralist and rightist parties, the functions ordinarily associated with party politics—such as the presentation of candidates and policy alternatives and the recruitment and training of leaders—continued to be performed by a small number of prominent leaders and their cohorts. These individuals in effect formed the mainstay of the country's party system and carried out their political activities in the name of whatever parties they led or were associated with.

In the years after the Western-style party system was first introduced in the late 1940s, parties invariably served as instruments of the ambitions of individuals or of cliques to which these individuals belonged. Often parties were formed shortly before or after a given national election so that elected deputies could use these organizations to form a coalition or simply as a sort of lobbying tactic.

## Background of Party Politics

In the 1950s party politics was generally characterized by the polarization of politicians into right-wing and left-wing blocs, but the intensification of armed conflict between the two antagonistic groups led to the emergence of a centrist bloc in 1960. This tripartite party alignment temporarily helped to stabilize the chaotic situation then confronting the Royal Lao Government.

Until 1958 the National Progressive Party and the Independent Party, both formed in the late 1940s and both conservative, were the two major political organizations. The only distinction between them was that, whereas the National Progressive Party's leaders, including Prince Souvanna Phouma, had been active in the Lao Issara movement, the leaders of the Independent Party had collaborated with the French colonial administration. In the general elections of December 1955 these parties together captured twenty-nine out of a total of thirty nine seats in the National Assembly. In June 1958 they coalesced, under the leadership of

Prince Souvanna Phouma, to form the Laotian People's Rally in an effort to counter the unexpectedly rising influence of the NLHS. Their concern had been heightened especially by the NLHS's substantial electoral gains in the May 1958 supplementary elections that were held to fill twenty-one seats in the National Assembly. At that time, the leftist party had won nine out of thirteen seats it contested, and the NLHS-supported Peace Party (renamed in 1963 the Peace and Neutralist Party, after its leader, Quinim Pholsena, was assassinated) additionally captured four out of six seats it contested.

The conservatives' reaction was reflected further, after the May 1958 election, in the formation of the anticommunist Committee for the Defense of National Interests. Led by General Phoumi Nosavan, this committee was composed largely of young conservatives, many of them army officers. After the April 1960 general elections, the committee became the core of a new organization called the Social Democrat Party, which absorbed also a number of dissenters from Souvanna Phouma's Laotian People's Rally.

The post-1960 election alignment of party representation in the National Assembly showed the Social Democrat Party controlling thirty-five seats (out of a total of fifty-nine seats—the number of the assembly seats had been increased from thirty-nine to fifty-nine in 1956). The Laotian People's Rally won seventeen seats; and independents, seven. There was no NLHS or Peace Party representation, although both entered candidates in the election. The leftist exclusion had been assured partly because most of the NLHS leaders were in prison at the time of the election on charges of endangering national security and partly because the electoral law enacted by the rightist government shortly before the contest had the effect, if not be design, of limiting candidacy to persons of powerful family connections or other locally influential conservative figures. There were also indications that the election was rigged to ensure the defeat of leftist candidates.

### Post-1963 Tendencies

In May 1961 Souvanna Phouma formed the new Lao Neutralist Party, which sought to widen the neutralist prime minister's influence at the expense of both the rightist and leftist forces. It achieved a measure of success, but its avowedly strict neutrality had a strongly pro-leftist bent during the 1961-62 period. The split between Kong Le and his rival, Colonel Deuane Sunnarath, within the neutralist army in early 1963, however, touched off a chain of reactions and counterreactions, eventuating a year later in Souvanna Phouma's so-called pro-rightist neutrality (see ch. 14, National Defense and Internal Security).

The neutralist-rightist coalition in Vientiane was formally legitimized by the general elections held in July 1965, which the NLHS boycotted. In this contest the Lao Neutralist Party won twelve seats, as did Sisouk na Champassak's moderately rightist Youth Movement. Formed two months before the election, the Youth Movement was backed by as assortment of young politicians. Some of them were formerly associated with the Committee for the Defense of National Interests, and others were followers of rightist leaders, such as Prince Boun Oum and Leuam Insisiengmay.

Two other groups also captured large blocs of seats in 1965. The conservative southern group of Prince Boun Oum and Leuam Insisiengmay returned fifteen deputies, and the Vientiane-based, so-called pro-neutralist, rightist group of Phoui Sananikone won nine seats. The Vientiane group formerly had been associated with Souvanna Phouma until he left the Laotian People's Rally in mid-1961 to organize his Lao Neutralist Party.

Most members of the Youth Movement had strong reservations about the prime minister's efforts to reform tax structures and improve budget procedures which, if implemented, would have adversely affected their individual positions. Thus, in the fall of 1966, joined by other conservative deputies, they successfully defeated the government's budget proposal. In retaliation, the prime minister dissolved the National Assembly in October 1966 and ordered a new national election. Some members of the Youth Movement were unable to stand for reelection in the new election, held in January 1967, because of a newly enacted law that raised the minimum age of candidates from the previous twenty to thirty-five years.

The January 1967 elections returned to the National Assembly a large number of deputies supporting Souvanna Phouma. The prime minister was in a position to command the allegiance of at least forty deputies, some of whom belonged to Phoui Sananikone's pro-neutralist rightist group. Unlike previous elections, all candidates campaigned in 1967 without identifying themselves with particular parties, evidently because of Souvanna Phouma's insistence that party labels would tend to divide rather than unite the nation at a critical juncture.

Thus, for all practical purposes, political parties faded into the background after 1967, although they continued to maintain offices in Vientiane. Instead, politicians began to identify themselves increasingly with the country's traditionally accepted and politically important families and economic interests. Thus after that election, fourteen of the fifteen deputies from the south formed the Lao Development Association, which was led by Prince Boun Oum. On the other hand, deputies from the northern, central, and western regions rallied under the banner of the Association of Northern Deputies.

This did not indicate, however, that regionalism would emerge as the overriding criterion of political behavior in Vientiane. Political expediency or personal loyalty to a given leader proved to be just as important in partisan competition. Thus in 1968, when Prince Boun Oum ran for the presidency of the National Assembly, he obtained twenty-three votes against thirty for the incumbent, Phoui Sananikone, the leader of the northern block of deputies. The near upset of Phoui Sananikone suggested an increase in the southerner's rightist tendencies in the assembly. According to a qualified analyst, the rise of Sisouk na Champassak in 1970 as Souvanna Phouma's second in command (as acting defense minister) appeared to have further strengthened these tendencies. It was also suggested that Sisouk's position in the Ministry of National Defense helped to tighten civilian control of the military establishment.

## THE LAO PATRIOTIC FRONT

The Lao Patriotic Front (Neo Lao Hak Sat—NLHS) continued to play a variety of mutually reinforcing roles in 1971—as a legal political party with its official representative still residing in Vientiane; as the legal political front of the semisecret People's Party of Laos; as an administrative apparatus; and as a mass organization designed to attract a broad cross section of Laotian people.

The NLHS adopted its current name in January 1956, when it held its first national congress. Until that time it had been called the Free Lao Front (Neo Lao Issara), first created in 1950 by Prince Souphanouvong as a counterorganization to Prince Souvanna Phouma's Lao Issara movement. In November 1957, as a result of a domestic agreement for civil and military reintegration of the Pathet Lao into a unified national government, the NLHS was permitted to function as a political party. Unlike other Laotian political parties, it has emerged as the only single mass-based political organization in the country (see ch. 3, Historical Setting).

In 1958 the NLHS participated in the supplementary elections, gaining nine out of the thirteen seats it contested; its electoral success was attributable in part to disunity among its adversaries. NLHS participation in the political process of the royal government ended in 1959, however, partly because of the rising influence of anticommunist elements in Vientiane but mostly because sixteen NLHS leaders, including seven deputies in the assembly, were arrested and held in detention for about a year. In mid-1959 the NLHS resumed military actions against the royal government.

The NLHS was once again brought into the decisionmaking apparatus of the Vientiane administration in June 1962, however, when it became a component of a tripartite coalition cabinet, a precondition of the 1962 thirteen-nation guarantee of Laotian neutrality. The tripartite arrangement, which actually was formed under considerable foreign pressure, lasted less than a year because of the sharpening of tensions among the three coalition partners (see ch. 10, Foreign Relations).

Operating first from the stronghold of Khang Khay and later from Samneua, the NLHS in 1971 was continuing to apply both political and military pressures on the Vientiane administration (see ch. 14, National Defense and Internal Security). On the political level, it intensified efforts to extol Colonel Deuane Sunnarath's pro-NLHS Patriotic Neutralist Forces as the "genuine" neutralist group (as distinguished from Souvanna Phouma's neutralist group in Vientiane); to establish a broad, popular united front against the Vientiane government; and to foster Laotian nationalism, if only for political expediency, as a motivating force in "the war of liberation against United States imperialist aggressors." In all these efforts, the NLHS stressed moderation and gradualism so as not to provoke any popular ill feelings or alienate any segment of the population.

The NLHS drive for mass support was especially active among the country's less prosperous non-Lao minorities, who in fact made up the bulk of the 1 million or so people in the leftist-controlled areas. It appeared to enjoy its greatest success among the Lao Theung (see Glossary) but was less successful with the Meo and related Man (Yao) groups in the country's northern region. Attempting to capitalize on the traditional antagonism of these minorities toward the lowland Lao (most of whom were in the royal government areas), the NLHS blamed the so-called exploitive policies of the Vientiane government and the Lao elite for whatever grievances or difficulties these groups might have encountered (see ch. 4, Social Systems). It also promised tribal people increased representation in the central government and more local autonomy, although only a few tribal leaders appeared to hold responsible positions in the highest echelon of the NLHS (nevertheless, a sizable representation when measured against their position in the royal government power structure). Among the ethnic Lao, the NLHS movement appeared to have made less progress, evidently because of the suspicion among them that the traditionally resented Vietnamese controlled the NLHS apparatus.

## Leadership and Organization

The NLHS leadership structure in 1971 was headed by Prince

Souphanouvong, listed officially as the chairman of the Central Committee of the NLHS. He was assisted by three vice chairmen: Kaysone Phomvihan, Sithone Kommadam, and Faydang. The sixty-three-member Central Committee (elected by the organization's second national congress in April 1964) was under the direction of a seven-member presidium (also called standing committee or political bureau) and of a secretary general. Among the more influential presidum members were Kaysone Phomvihan, Nouhak Phoumsavan, Sithone Kommadam, and Khamtay Siphandone.

A leading Western observer suggested the existence of three major sources of recruitment: influential families with ethnic Lao background; tribal chieftains; and persons of "more modest backgrounds." In the first category were members of princely families (such as Souphanouvong and Souk Vongsak) and members of professionally respected families (such as Phoumi Vongvichit and Singkapo Chounramany). The second category included Sithone Kommadam, a Lao Theung leader, and Faydang, a Meo notable. The last category included those with more diverse backgrounds, such as Kaysone Phomvihan and Nouhak Phoumsovan, who had close connections with the Vietnamese communist movement "either through birth, education, or early career association."

Another characteristic of the NLHS leadership was their stability, dating back to the late 1940s. In the late 1960s and in 1970 some Western sources suggested the existence of a rift between leadership cliques favoring the Soviet Union and those favoring the People's Republic of China (PRC). Prince Souphanouvong and Phoumi Vongvichit (secretary general of the NLHS Central Committee) were said to be pro-Soviet oriented, and Kaysone Phomvihan and Nouhak Phoumsavan sympathized with the PRC. If these sympathies were true, the impact of this rift on the NLHS movement in 1971 remained unknown.

The manner in which the NLHS's decisionmaking power was actually distributed within its inner councils remained unclear in 1971. Western observers generally agreed, however, that the NLHS was under the control of the People's Party of Laos (Phak Pasason Lao—PPL). Founded in 1955, the PPL began to emerge from its self-imposed secrecy in the late 1960s. As of 1971 it was not officially banned by the royal government.

These observers also agreed that the PPL was in turn subject to the control and supervision of the Vietnam Worker's Party, whose political guidance and military support, they concluded, were critical to the survival of the NLHS in Laos (see fig. 8). According to one Western estimate, the PPL membership—a highly conjectural subject—ranged from 12,000 to 14,000 persons at the end of 1970 in the NLHS-administered territories; it did not indicate how many

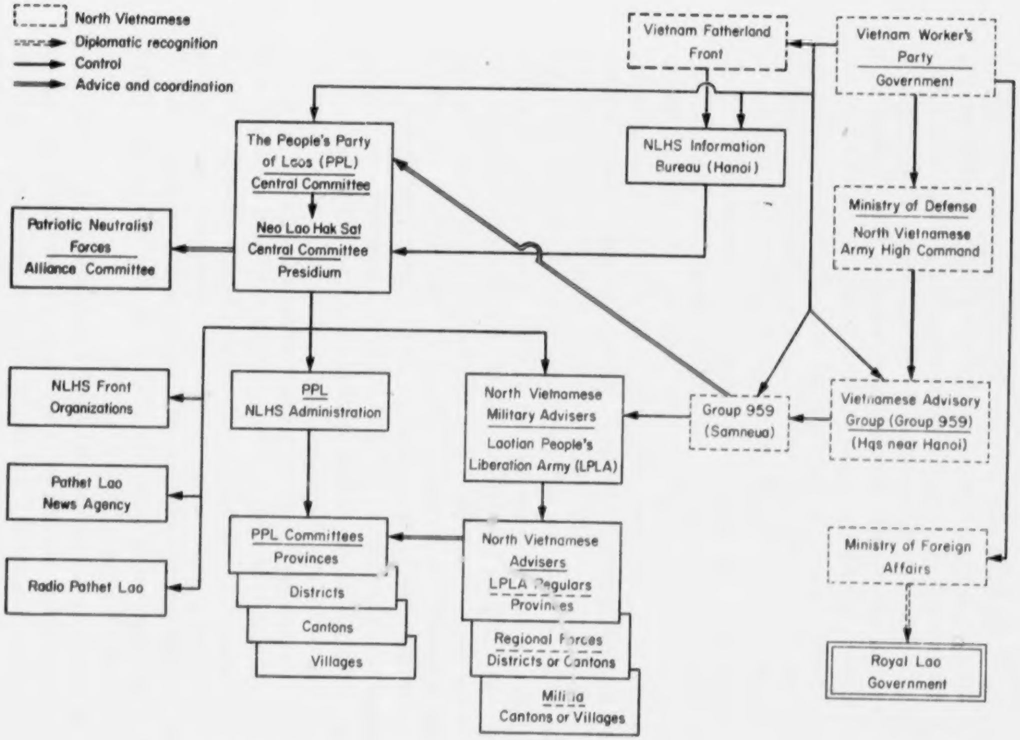

North Vietnamese
Diplomatic recognition
Control
Advice and coordination
Vietnam Fatherland Front
Vietnam Worker's Party
Government
NLHS Information Bureau (Hanoi)
The People's Party of Laos (PPL)
Central Committee
Neo Lao Hak Sat
Central Committee
Presidium
Ministry of Defense
North Vietnamese Army High Command
Patriotic Neutralist Forces
Alliance Committee
NLHS Front Organizations
PPL
NLHS Administration
North Vietnamese Military Advisers
Laotian People's Liberation Army (LPLA)
Group 959 (Samneua)
Vietnamese Advisory Group (Group 959) (Hqs near Hanoi)
Pathet Lao News Agency
PPL Committees
Provinces
Districts
Cantons
Villages
North Vietnamese Advisers
LPLA Regulars
Provinces
Regional Forces
Districts or Cantons
Militia
Cantons or Villages
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Royal Lao Government
Radio Pathet Lao

*Figure 8. Laos, an approximation of the political and military organization of the Neo Lao Hak Sat, 1971*

PPL members there were in the royal government areas. This source also did not indicate whether the PPL membership overlapped with the NLHS membership. Another Western source estimated the NLHS membership in 1970 (as distinguished from the PPL membership, said to be about 700 as of 1964) to be in the range of from 1,500 to 3,000 persons.

From sketchy indications, it appeared that the PPL's control of the NLHS was ensured by an interlocking leadership extending from the top to the village level, a control pattern used in other communist-controlled countries. The PPL's secretary general, Kaysone Phomvihan, believed to be the most powerful figure in the Laotian communist movement, was at the same time the NLHS minister of defense, a presidium member, vice chairman of its Central Committee, and reportedly also a member of the Vietnam Worker's Party. Nouhak Phoumsavan, the chairman of the twenty-member PPL Central Committee, was an NLHS presidium member, a secretary of the NLHS Central Committee, and apparently also the NLHS's chief liaison man between Samneua and Hanoi. Another key figure, Phoumi Vongvichit, was the NLHS secretary general, a presidium member, and chairman of two of its front organizations—the Laotian Patriotic Teachers' Union and the Laotian Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee.

The extent of power wielded by Prince Souphanouvong, the most widely publicized NLHS figure at home and abroad, within the PPL NLHS decisionmaking complex remained a matter of conjecture. Souphanouvong, also called the "Red Prince" in noncommunist circles, was reportedly a member of the PPL; if this is true, in what capacity he was involved was not clear. Some observers tended to regard him as no more than a figurehead of the NLHS, but a leading Western analyst suggested in 1971 that the prince probably had "significant influence" (although not nearly as much as that attributed to Kaysone or Nouhak) because of his popularity, his strong qualities of leadership, and his longstanding prominence in the years after the founding of the Free Lao Front in 1950.

The function of popularizing the NLHS both domestically and externally was performed by a number of front organizations or associations embracing peasants, workers, women, youth, students, monks, intellectuals, and civil servants. These organizations were penetrated by well-trained, hard-core NLHS cadres (or PPL, if their cadre corps could be seen as overlapping). Trained as dedicated Communists, these activists operated the network of NLHS cells of about six members each in villages, study groups, family groups, various auxiliary associations, administrative apparatuses, and the army. These cadres disseminated communist propaganda, indoctrinated recruits, and conducted mass movements—by persuasion, coercion, or terror, In membership drives, the NLHS concentrated apparently on youth, lower class elements, and minority groups.

Apart from its liaison mission in Vientiane, the security of which was assertedly threatened constantly, the NLHS maintained an information bureau in Hanoi. This bureau was attached nominally to the Vietnam Fatherland Front of North Vietnam, but actually it appeared to be under the direction of the Vietnam Worker's Party. The Vietnam Fatherland Front served more or less a rubber stamp function for the workers' party.

The military arm of the NLHS was the Lao People's Liberation Army, whose commander in chief in 1971 was Khamtay Siphandone (see ch. 14, National Defense and Internal Security). The actual operational responsibility of the army was vested in North Vietnamese military advisers operationally accountable to the Vietnamese Advisory Group (also known as Group 959) located near Hanoi. Group 959 had a forward command post in Samneua and reportedly also advised the PPL, presumably on political as well as military matters.

### Patriotic Neutralist Forces

Although formally separate and autonomous, Colonel Deuane Sunnarath's Patriotic Neutralist Forces actually functioned in 1971 as a principal political and military adjunct of the NLHS. The Patriotic Neutralist Forces held their first national political conference at Khang Khay in April 1969, at which time the conference delegates declared that the forces were an integral part of the "revolutionary forces under the united leadership of the NLHS Central Committee headed by Prince Souphanouvong." They not only hailed "the brilliant and wise leadership of the NLHS Central Committee" but also vowed to strengthen their unity and cooperation with the NLHS in every possible way.

The political strategy of the Patriotic Neutralist Forces, and by extension that of the NLHS, was to create the impression domestically and internationally that there was no Laotian neutralist group other than the Patriotic Neutralist Forces, assertedly because Souvanna Phouma had defected to the ranks of the rightists and betrayed the neutralist cause. Using this assertion as a point of departure, it appeared in 1971 that the NLHS would quite likely demand that any future alteration of the 1962 tripartite arrangement should be carried out in such a way as to include the Patriotic Neutralist Forces as the sole neutralist component. If the NLHS had its way, the reorganized arrangement would give the NLHS-Patriotic Neutralist Forces entente a dominant voice in reshaping the destiny of the country.

Apart from Colonel Deuane Sunnarath (listed as vice chairman of the fifteen-member Alliance Committee of the Patriotic Neutralist Forces and supreme commander of the Patriotic Neutralist Forces in the Plain of Jars sector), principal leaders included General Khammouane Boupha, supreme commander of the Patriotic Neutralist Forces in northern Laos, and Khamsouk Keola, chairman of the Alliance Committee. According to a statement by Khamsouk Keola in November 1970, the northern part of Phong Saly was said to be at that time "administered exclusively" by the Patriotic Neutralist Forces. He also stated that the armed forces of the Patriotic Neutralist Forces and the NLHS had "separate commands" and that "joint decisions" were made for each military operation after "a consultation period and coordination of actions." Western estimates of overall Patriotic Neutralist Forces strength generally agreed on the figure of about 2,000 army regulars in 1970.

# CHAPTER 10
# FOREIGN RELATIONS

Laotian foreign affairs in 1971 continued to be influenced by the interplay of foreign powers and domestic interests. Predominant external influences were related to the Vietnam war, and in these the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam) and the United States played the principal roles. Equally important was the intense concern over the prospect of North Vietnamese control of Laos. The Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China (PRC), and Thailand played lesser roles. French influence, which until the mid-1950s had been supreme, continued to hold a prominent position in 1971. Relations with the neighboring states of the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam) and the Khmer Republic (Cambodia) had little impact.

Several internal factors complicated Laotian foreign relations. One of the most critical was the coexistence of two antagonistic Laotian administrations governing different areas of the national territory. The Royal Lao Government in mid-1971 had effective territorial control of about one-third of the country's domain, principally along the Mekong River. The remaining territory, inhabited by perhaps one-third of the population, was being administered by the Lao Patriotic Front (Neo Lao Hak Sat—NLHS) and its military arm, the Lao People's Liberation Army (known as the Pathet Lao until 1965).

Both administrations were deeply involved in 1971, although at different levels, in what might be termed foreign relations. In mid-1971 the Royal Lao Government maintained diplomatic relations with thirty-five countries—although it had diplomatic missions in less than one-third of these. It was recognized as the de jure government of Laos, even by powers that aided and abetted NLHS insurgency, such as the PRC and the Soviet Union. North Vietnam also recognized the Royal Lao Government, although it was at the same time supporting materially, militarily, politically, and diplomatically the NLHS administration and its armed forces in their conflict against the royal government.

Notwithstanding its unrecognized status (either de jure or de facto), the NLHS has made an impressive number of foreign contacts and has participated in, and been the subject of, several international conferences. Most of the official international exchanges of the NLHS, however, have been with the foreign communist states that have furnished the moral and material support indispendable to sustain the insurgent so-called liberation movement.

The Royal Lao Government stated foreign policy, based upon the 1962 Geneva agreements, continued in 1971 to be neutralist. Faced by the pragmatic question of survival in the contest with the communist-led NLHS, however, it has accepted Western aid. The NLHS, which has described its foreign policy as one of "peace, independence, neutrality, solidarity, and friendship with the peoples and governments of all peace- and justice-loving countries," has accepted aid from the communist countries. Both have further declared that they would not join any military alliances or allow any country to establish military bases in Laos or use Laotian territory for purposes of aggression.

Passive defensiveness, according to Western authorities, is a salient characteristic of both Royal Lao Government and NLHS foreign policy. For the most part, foreign-policy initiative has been evoked externally or represents reluctant reactions to foreign or domestic exigencies. This tendency toward inertia by Laotian authorities antedates the independence of the kingdom. In 1946 it was French, rather than Laotian, initiative that established the modus vivendi whereby Laos became a recognized separate political entity in the Indochina Federation.

Similarly, it was French rather than Laotian initiative that brought about the conclusion of the Elysée Agreement in March 1949, by which Laos was recognized as an "independent state" under the French Union, and in 1953 it was French action that led to complete Laotian independence. Among the Indochinese states, Laos alone continued to participate in French Union activities after the defeat of French forces at Dien Bien Phu in 1954.

Western students see this passive defensiveness and response to external initiative in part as the result of the easygoing and tolerant nature of the Lao, coupled with their widespread lack of interest in, or indifference to, politics. Both attitudes, in turn, are said to be compounded by intense loyalties to strictly local authority. Given such attitudes attributed by Western scholars to the Lao, plus the slender resources and inchoate writ exercised by national authorities, no Laotian government could afford either to provoke its more powerful and dynamic neighbors or to defy the will of international agencies (see ch. 4, Social Systems).

The effective conduct of Laotian foreign policy has been further vitiated by the competition of two rival governments. Even with a single Laotian government conducting foreign policy, the basic task of preserving the country's independence and territorial integrity amounted to an almost impossible task. Under such circumstances, the Royal Lao Government since 1953 has sought foreign material assistance and guidance for any move it has considered necessary to maintain the sovereignty and independence of the country.

## THE GENEVA CONFERENCES

Laos has been described as a country that became, and remained in 1971, a sovereign state by permission of the international community. Nowhere has the point been better illustrated than in the international conferences held at Geneva in 1954 and during 1961 and 1962. The first of these was held to discuss both Korean reunification and the problem of restoring peace in Indochina; at the second conference, Laos was the sole topic. At both conferences, Laos was more the object of negotiation than a participant. The agreements reached at the 1961-62 conference, in particular, have remained the terms of reference for the continued existence of Laos as a sovereign state since that time and are fundamental to the consideration of Laotian foreign relations (see Appendix).

The first Geneva Conference was convened in the wake of the French debacle at Dien Bien Phu, which marked the collapse of the efforts of the French Republic to restore the state of affairs in Indochina that existed before World War II. On April 26, 1954, the representatives of France, Great Britain, the PRC, the Soviet Union, North Vietnam, South Vietnam, the Kingdom of Cambodia, and the Kingdom of Laos assembled in Geneva to fashion a peace settlement in Indochina. The Laotian delegation, led by Royal Lao Government Premier Phoui Sananikone, was confronted with the necessity of defending the legitimacy of its government against the North Vietnamese claim (unsuccessfully pressed throughout the conference) that Laos could be properly represented only by the "resistance government" (the Free Lao Front) functioning in the mountainous northeastern provinces of the country. Representatives of this "resistance government" were present with the North Vietnamese delegation but attended only as observers.

On July 20, 1954, the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities in Laos was signed by a representative of the high command of the French Union forces and by the North Vietnamese vice minister of national defense for the commander in chief of the so-called fighting units of the Pathet Lao and for the People's Army of (North) Vietnam. The cease-fire agreement provided for the evacuation of foreign military contingents, except certain specified French instructors and garrisons. According to Article 14, Pathet Lao forces were directed to regroup in the provinces of Phong Saly and Houa Phan (Sam Neua) in north and northeast Laos, which had been overrun by them a year earlier, with unrestricted freedom of movement in the corridor between the two provinces. Royal Lao Government troops, however, were ordered to remain in the positions in which they found themselves at the close of hostilities.

The agreement authorized establishment of the International

Commission for Supervision and Control (commonly known as ICC). Its members were to be provided by India (designated as chairman), Canada, and Poland; headquarters for the Laos ICC were to be in Vientiane. The ICC was directed to supervise implementation of the cease-fire agreement. A joint commission from the opposing forces was also delegated to assist and observe the disengagement of opposing combat forces. The cessation of hostilities was scheduled for August 6, with the process of disengagement to be completed by midnight, November 19, 1954.

On July 21, 1954, the Royal Lao Government issued two declarations, which were cross-referenced with Articles 3 through 5 of the conference's Final Declaration of the same date. In the first declaration, the royal government resolved to take the necessary measures to integrate all citizens without discrimination into the national community and to secure freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution of 1947; affirmed the right of all citizens freely to participate as electors or candidates in general elections by secret ballot; and announced that it would promulgate measures for special representation in the royal government administration of Phong Saly and Houa Phan provinces of Laotian nationals who had not supported the royal government during the hostilities.

In the second declaration, the Royal Lao Government pledged itself never to pursue a policy of aggression; never to participate in a military alliance not in conformity with the principles of the United Nations Charter nor to permit foreign bases on Laotian territory unless the security of the country was threatened; to settle its international disputes by pacific means; and not to request foreign military aid except as specified as necessary for national defense.

The second Geneva Conference, held during 1961 and 1962, was represented partly as a resuscitation of the first one; it dealt exclusively, however, with unresolved Laotian affairs. Great Britain and the Soviet Union served in the capacity of conference cochairmen, as they had in 1954, but the number of countries participating was increased to fourteen, compared with nine in 1954. The participating countries were: Burma, Cambodia, Canada, the PRC, North Vietnam, France, India, Laos, Poland, South Vietnam, Thailand, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and the United States.

Proposals to resuscitate the Geneva conference were initially evoked by fighting that broke out in Vientiane in December 1960 between Kong Le neutralists, who had staged a coup d'etat in August, and right-wing Royal Lao Government forces (see ch. 3, Historical Setting). At that time the Indian prime minister addressed an appeal to the 1954 conference cochairmen to reconvene the Laos ICC, which had adjourned indefinitely two years earlier.

Four days later, the British government expressed its support for the formation of a government of national union in Laos. The British ambassador in Moscow was instructed to express British concern to the Soviet Union about the situation in Laos and to get Soviet backing for the view that foreign aid to the Laotian rebels against the Royal Lao Government should cease.

On December 22, 1960, the Soviet Union agreed to the reconvening of the ICC and additionally suggested that the Geneva conference should be reconvened with the same representative composition as in 1954. It requested, however, that neutralist Souvanna Phouma, who had just been forced from the premiership by rightist forces and was in exile, should be contacted for negotiations with Laotian authorities. By early January 1961 the British and several other interested governments had recognized the successor right-wing Boun Oum regime; consequently, the Soviet proposal was rejected.

In January 1961 Prince Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia proposed a conference in Laos consisting of the signatories to the 1954 Geneva agreements, plus the member countries of the ICC, Thailand, Burma, and the United States. Meanwhile, the neutralist forces of Kong Le had seized the Plain of Jars, and in the same month the British government declared that the first order of business was establishment of a cease-fire in Laos under ICC supervision. It worked out firm proposals for revival of the ICC on the basis of consultations with the United States, France, Canada, and India and submitted them to the Soviet Union. In mid-February the Laotian king appealed to all countries to refrain from intervening in the internal affairs of Laos and to respect the country's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and neutrality.

On March 9 and 10, 1961, conversations between neutralist Souvanna Phouma and right-wing General Phoumi Nosavan in Phnom Penh brought concurrence on the need for the neutralization of Laos by international convention, which would provide for an impartial international commission to police foreign intervention in the country. The Nosavan mission was denounced by the communist-dominated NLHS; consequently, further negotiations foundered. Interruption of the Phnom Penh conversations was reinforced by the concurrent outbreak of a Soviet-supplied neutralist-Pathet Lao offensive against the Royal Lao Government.

In March, United States President John F. Kennedy stressed his country's unequivocal support of a neutral and independent Laos; he warned that the United States would act under the provisions of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) in the event of aggression against Laos from any quarter. A joint Anglo-Soviet communique in April called for a cease-fire, proposed the reconvening of the Laos ICC, and issued invitations for a fourteen-power Geneva conference. The ICC was revived in New Delhi at the end of April. After report of a de facto cease-fire in Laos in early May, representatives of the ICC went to that country. Bickering over Laotian representation was settled by permitting the seating of delegates from all three factions—rightist, neutralist, and the procommunist NLHS—and the conference was convened in Geneva on May 16, 1961.

The neutralization of Laos, the conference's main order of business was in essence accomplished outside the conference, by President Kennedy and Soviet Premier Nikita S. Kruschchev at a meeting in Vienna in June, at which both agreed on the need for a neutral, independent Laos guaranteed by international agreement. At that time, Laos was considered of marginal interest to both the United States and the Soviet Union. Actual negotiations within the conference on details finally resulted in the Draft Declaration of Neutrality, to be signed by all the participants except Laos, and the Statement of Neutrality by the Government of Laos; both were approved on December 18, 1961.

In order to obviate the conflict as to which of the three factions—rightist, neutralist, or NLHS—represented the nation, the conference was adjourned until a coalition regime could be agreed upon and assume governing authority. Agreement on the Provisional Government of National Union was reached by the contending factions on June 12, 1962, and the new government assumed office eleven days later. The first act of this overwhelmingly neutralist regime was to proclaim a nationwide cease-fire. After arrival of a coalition government delegation in Geneva, the full conference resumed its work on July 2, 1962, and on July 23 signed the Declaration on the Neutrality of Laos (see Appendix).

The declaration pledged the signatories to refrain from impairing the sovereignty, independence, neutrality, unity, and territorial integrity of Laos. It expressly enjoined them from intervention in the country's internal affairs and from attaching conditions to aid grants to the coalition government. The signatories were also forbidden to introduce foreign troops or other military personnel into Laos, to entice Laos into any military alliance or other agreement inconsistent with Laotian neutrality, or to establish military bases on Laotian territory. Laotian wishes not to recognize the protection of any military coalition or other alliance, including SEATO, were to be respected. A protocol to the declaration redefined the role of the ICC and coordinated responsibilities of the ICC and its cochairman, and it also ordered evacuation of all foreign troops within thrity days after the ICC had notified the Royal Lao Government that its inspection teams had been deployed.

The ICC subsequently established a headquarters in Vientiane, which it continued to maintain and staff in 1971. Although initially active in processing the withdrawal of foreign troops, it soon became relatively ineffective, in part because of vetoes by the Polish representative, and by 1970 it was said to be practically in a state of paralysis. From 1964 the ICC was denied entry to NLHS territory, a ban that continued in effect in 1971.

## FOREIGN RELATIONS OF THE ROYAL LAO GOVERNMENT

International recognition of Laos under Royal Lao Government rule was initiated while the country was still in the process of achieving sovereign independence. Under the March 1949 Elysée Agreement between France and Laos, the country experienced rapid internal administrative development. By the Franco-Laotian convention of July 19, 1949, it received recognition as an independent "associate" state in the French Union. Under this convention and its annexes, Laos was accorded membership in various French Union bodies, protection of the "joint defense" of the country by the convention signatories, and also "direct" diplomatic relations with France. On February 7, 1950, Laos—and its sister French Union states in Indochina—was recognized by the United States and Great Britain. British recognition at the time, however, was qualified by due regard for the status of these countries as "associate states within the French Union." Recognition by the United States and Great Britain was followed by recognition by most of the countries of Western Europe and Latin America and, in Asia, by Thailand, with which Laos immediately exchanged resident diplomatic missions.

The Laotian view of its position at this time was expressed at the Conference of Union Members, held at Pau, France, on November 26, 1950. At this conference the head of the Laotian delegation stated that "there could be no question, for us, of leaving the palisades of the former Protectorate." Until 1953, when Laos attained full independence, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Royal Lao Government remained under French control (see ch. 3, Historical Setting). Since that time, Laotian foreign relations have been handled solely by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

### Relations with Communist Countries

#### Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam)

Direct contacts between the Royal Lao Government and North Vietnam were made initially at the Bandung Afro-Asian Conference in April 1955. At the conference, a written declaration was made by the two countries to the effect that North Vietnam considered the resolution of the civil war as an "internal" Laotian matter to be worked out by the parties themselves and that "friendly" relations between the two countries were to be developed in accordance with the "five principles of peaceful coexistence" enunciated in the 1954 Sino-Indian Agreement of Tibet: mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty; mutual nonaggression; mutual noninterference in each other's internal affairs; equality and mutual benefit; and peaceful coexistence.

North Vietnam extended formal recognition to the Royal Lao Government in 1962, at which time it dispatched an ambassador to Vientiane and established a mission there. About the time of the NLHS withdrawal from the tripartite coalition government in 1963, the North Vietnamese ambassador left Vientiane. He returned for a brief visit with the king at the royal capital in Luang Prabang in 1968 and again came to Vientiane in May 1969 on what he described as a "special mission." During this 1969 visit the North Vietnamese envoy, in talks with the Royal Lao Government premier and foreign minister, Souvanna Phouma, reaffirmed his government's recognition of the Royal Lao Government. In 1971 North Vietnam continued to maintain an embassy in Vientiane under a chargé d'affaires.

In October 1970 the Royal Lao Government issued a white book entitled "The Violations of the 1962 Geneva Accords by the Government of North Vietnam," which was the fifth in a series of such official pronouncements dating from 1963. The 1970 white book charged the North Vietnamese with acts of aggression and treaty violations including: the dissemination of subversive propaganda among the Lao population and to the world at large in cooperation with the NLHS; the unauthorized construction and maintenance of a road communications network through the country, the most important part being the Ho Chi Minh Trail complex (which appeared in 1971 to be North Vietnam's major short-term interest in Laos as long as the war in South Vietnam continued); the introduction of troops and military personnel to assist the NLHS in the struggle against the government; and the introduction into Laos of arms and war materiel to assist the NLHS in its subversive activities.

The reported massive North Vietnamese military presence in Laos has been cited as one of the major obstacles to any direct peace negotiations between the NLHS and the Royal Lao Government. North Vietnam has denounced charges of a North Vietnamese army presence in Laos as "slanderous." Hanoi's Vietnam News Agency continued to relay the NLHS "cease-fire and reconciliation" formula, which would pertain after the end of United States bombing and "intervention and aggression" in Laos (see ch. 9, Political Dynamics). In reply, the Royal Lao Government maintained as of mid-1971 that the first step to peace was withdrawal of all foreign troops from the country.

Continuing acrimonious propaganda exchanges between North Vietnam and the Royal Lao Government and such events as the stoning in Vientiane of North Vietnamese diplomats in mid-1971 underscored the tension that prevailed between the two countries. The principal cause of this longstanding friction was what the neutralist prime minister of Laos, Souvanna Phouma, termed the "permanent and massive presence of North Vietnamese troops in Laos" (in April 1971 the estimated strength of these troops was 100,000) (see ch. 14, National Defense and Internal Security). In mid-April 1971, when North Vietnamese troops were threatening the royal capital of Luang Prabang, North Vietnamese President Ton Duc Thang in a message to the king expressed the hope that the Laotian people would successfully build a "peaceful, independent and neutral Kingdom of Laos" and reaffirmed North Vietnamese intentions to scrupulously respect the 1962 Geneva agreements.

### People's Republic of China

The attitude of the People's Republic of China (PRC) toward Laos in the early 1950s was one of noninterference. Since then, relations have been correct but not necessarily friendly.

At the 1954 Geneva Conference on Indochina, the PRC's principal objective was preclusion of "encirclement" by United States military bases. Another objective was apparently to support continuation of the Pathet Lao, which was permitted by the conference to regroup in Houa Phan and Phong Saly provinces. Premier Chou En-lai, however, the following year profusely assured Royal Lao Government Premier Katay D. Sasorith at the 1955 Bandung conference of his country's continued nonintervention in Laos. The PRC prime minister also gave his government's oral nonagression pledge to the Royal Lao Government at the conference.

Determined to maintain Laotian neutrality in prevailing Sino-United States frictions, Prince Souvanna Phouma, who had become premier in March 1955, visited Hanoi and Peking in August 1956 as the followup of commitments made by his predecessor at Bandung. Unwilling to accord Royal Lao Government recognition to either the PRC or the Republic of China at the time, he turned down the PRC request to establish a consulate in Vientiane. He also told his PRC hosts that, although the Royal Lao Government rejected SEATO protection, his country would continue to accept United States economic aid.

On the other hand, the Laotians readily accepted PRC demands that the Royal Lao Government forbid the installation of United States bases and the stationing of United States military advisers on their soil. Although France was a member of SEATO, the PRC recognized the right of the Royal Lao Government to allow retention of French bases on Laotian territory if it so desired. Finally, the Laotian premier secured a nonaggression pledge from the PRC and, in a joint statement with Chou En-lai, pledged his government to a policy of "peace and neutrality."

Mounting foreign communist pressure began toward the end of 1958. This was attributed in part to the right-wing orientation of the Phoui Sananikone government, which assumed power on August 18. Communist pressure also may have been provoked by the Royal Lao Government decisions at the close of 1958 to admit a consulate of the Republic of China in Vientiane and to raise the status of the South Vietnamese legation to that of an embassy. Reflecting this growing pressure was the occupation of parts of northern Laos by the North Vietnamese. Concurrently, the PRC in December supported a call by Prince Souphanouvong for the return of the Laos ICC.

Fighting broke out in July 1959 in Houa Phan Province. The Royal Lao Government proclaimed a state of emergency in nearby provinces and on August 4 requested United Nations assistance. Eight days later the PRC declared that it opposed submission of the Laotian issue to the United Nations. A PRC propaganda campaign against the Royal Lao Government, which had begun in late 1958 with agitation for revival of the ICC, continued unabated until about the time Souvanna Phouma came to power once again in August 1960. In November 1960 Souvanna Phouma agreed to include NLHS representation in his government, and the PRC expressed its willingness to cooperate. The following month, however, the premier's plans in this regard were shattered by the right-wing coup that forced him from office.

The PRC continued to insist, however, that the only lawful government of Laos was that of Souvanna Phouma, who had fled to Cambodia. When the Soviet Union and North Vietnam began airlifting Soviet matériel to the Pathet Lao and neutralist forces, the PRC decided not to compete with them. Instead, it expressed a desire for a peaceful settlement and on December 29, 1960, endorsed North Vietnam's call for reconvening the Geneva Conference and reactivating the ICC.

In March 1961 Souvanna Phouma returned to Laos and set up joint headquarters at Khang Khay in the Plain of Jars with his half-brother, the nominal head of the NLHS, Prince Souphanouvong. Both leaders journeyed to Peking in April.

The PRC sent a large delegation headed by Foreign Minister

Ch'en I to the fourteen-nation conference on Laos at Geneva in 1961. After the first major step toward establishment of a new Provisional Government of National Union was taken in Zurich in June, it was announced on October 7, 1961, that consulates general would be established by the PRC in Phong Saly and by Laos at K'un-ming in Yunnan Province.

In November 1961 the PRC announced the establishment of a cultural mission at the NLHS capital of Khang Khay in Xieng Khouang Province. The mission, headed by the PRC ambassador in Hanoi, reportedly included a number of high-ranking party functionaries noted for their expertise in military and political activism. Shortly after conclusion of the Geneva Conference in July 1962, the PRC established diplomatic relations with the Royal Lao Government at the ambassadorial level.

The PRC mission in Khang Khay from its inception was reportedly a center for the dissemination of Maoist propaganda. It has been further asserted that the Pathet Lao radio service, at least initially after the arrival of the cultural mission, was manned by PRC technicians. The most recent available information on the cultural mission in mid-1971, dated from a year before, was that it was still functioning, although its exact location was not known.

PRC propaganda in 1971 continued attacks, begun at the start of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, against right-wing factions of the Royal Lao Government, which are vaguely identified as the "lackeys of United States imperialism." The NLHS, along with the other "peace- and justice-loving peoples of Indochina" and their respective "liberation" movements, have been steadily exhorted to wage "protracted war against United States aggression and for national salvation." A *Peking Review* article of January 10, 1969, revealed Chinese Communist Party opposition to a negotiated settlement of the Laotian conflict, declaring that such a proposal denoted vain United States attempts to induce the patriotic armed forces and people to give up their struggle. The PRC position was further elaborated in a joint communiqué of the central committees of the Chinese Communist Party and the (North) Vietnam Worker's Party and the governments of the PRC and North Vietnam of March 8, 1971, which stated that the Laotian question should be settled by the people of Laos themselves in accordance with the "five-point political solution" proposed by the NLHS in March 1970 (see ch. 9, Political Dynamics).

### Soviet Union

Relations with the Soviet Union have been ostensibly correct but in 1971 could hardly be considered friendly. When Laos applied for United Nations membership under the sponsorship of France in September 1952, its application was vetoed by the Soviet Union, and the Soviet veto was not lifted until December 1955. In 1957 the Soviet Union recognized the Royal Lao Government, but missions were not exchanged. The Soviet Union served as cosponsor of both the 1954 and 1962 Geneva conferences; however, in neither instance did such cosponsorship appear to reflect any Soviet vital interest in Laos as such.

To the extent that any interest may be inferred from its characteristic, and at least outward, aloofness from Laotian affairs over the years, the Soviet Union seemed principally concerned with the maintenance of a neutralized buffer between those states that it supported and those supported by the United States. In this regard it has supported the NLHS and other dissident elements. It has also, perhaps for reasons of expediency, continued to accord official recognition to incumbent royal governments.

Soviet aid to rebellious elements appears to have been openly undertaken only during periods of cooling relations between the Royal Lao Government and the United States. In October 1960 the first Soviet ambassador accredited to the royal government arrived in Vientiane. His arrival was apparently timed to coincide with the departure of a United States mission, headed by a special emissary, J. Graham Parsons, that was widely reported in the Western press at the time to have attempted without success to get the royal government to abandon its neutralist policy in return for the resumption of United States aid. In December 1960 the Soviet Union began airlifting war matériel, via Hanoi, to the neutralist Kong Le paratroops and, in January 1961, also to the Pathet Lao; the two forces were then uncomfortable allies on the Plain of Jars against the incumbent rightist Boun Oum regime.

During periods of diminished or embargoed United States assistance, the neutralist Royal Lao Government regimes, under Souvanna Phouma, sought favorable Soviet aid grants. Acceptance of Soviet aid by neutralists loyal to the Constitution and Souvanna Phouma did not, however, seem to effect any warming of relations as a whole; neither did neutralist acceptance of Soviet arms necessarily mean unconditional alignment with the causes of the Soviet Union or its allies in Southeast Asia.

Only since 1970 has the Soviet Union made any real effort to cultivate friendly relations with the Royal Lao Government. For the first time, Soviet high-level ministerial officials included Laos among other countries visited.

### Other Communist Countries

In mid-1971 the Royal Lao Government had granted recognition to, and had obtained recognition from, six European communist states in addition to the Soviet Union. These were Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Yugoslavia. A resident ambassador, however, was posted only in Moscow (the ambassador in Moscow was also accredited to Czechoslovakia, Poland, Romania, and Yugoslavia). None of the six countries had missions in Vientiane, but ambassadors resident in either Hanoi or Phnom Penh were accredited to the royal government. The royal government also had established relations with the Mongolian People's Republic, but resident missions did not exist in either country's capital (the Laotian ambassador in Moscow was accredited to Mongolia, and the Mongolian ambassador in Hanoi was similarly accredited to Vientiane).

## Relations with Noncommunist Countries

### Thailand

Thailand was the first country in Asia to recognize Laos. Recognition in 1950 was immediately followed by the exchange of diplomatic missions, and uninterrupted cordiality has characterized Laotian-Thai relations from that time. The friendly relations between the two countries are owing in part at least to the bonds of common religion, ethnicity, and culture. There are, however, underlying sources of mistrust, and many Lao believe that the Thai have not given up their claim to areas of Laos west of the Mekong River, which they earlier held and reoccupied during World War II (see ch. 3, Historical Setting).

Thailand's motive for permitting irregulars to be recruited for service in Laos (under Lao command) to bolster Royal Lao Government resistance against enemy attack has seemed to Western observers more related to practical considerations of its own external security than to cultural and ideological affinities. Thai decisions to this effect, since at least the summer of 1964, have reportedly been intended largely to counter traditional Vietnamese expansionist proclivities in Southeast Asia.

A pragmatic, self-interest approach has governed the course of mutual relations between the two countries. The primary interest of the Royal Lao Government in accepting Thai aid was the need of a handy ally inclined—and able—to save it from overthrow. The main interest of Thailand in providing such aid was presumably its traditional need to preclude or thwart Vietnamese control of the left bank of the Mekong by guaranteeing the continued existence of an independent Lao government.

By the mid-1960s Bangkok, the capital of Thailand, had replaced Saigon as the principal maritime outlet of landlocked Laos. Possibly this change of seaports for Laotian commerce has introduced some economic interest in addition to Thailand's longstanding security interests. During critical periods of internal Laotian strife through the mid-1960s, Thailand appeared to be exclusively a supporter and ally of conservative, pro-Western Laotian factions and regimes. It was during this period that Bangkok ostensibly became a refuge for such right-wing Laotian exiles as General Phoumi Nosavan and General Siho Lamphouthakoul, who fled to Thailand after the abortive military coup led by them in February 1965. Alleged Thai refusal to collaborate with neutralist Laotian regimes has been belied by Thailand's support of the anticommunist, neutralist Souvanna Phouma regime since mid-1967.

### United States

United States recognition of Laos was announced on February 7, 1950. Nearly five years passed, however, before the first resident United States minister arrived in the Laotian capital. After recognition, the United States dispatched a mission to Saigon, then capital of the French Union, to explore the possibility of granting economic assistance to the three autonomous states within the union. The French proved reluctant to permit Laos—and its sister Indochinese states—to negotiate directly with the United States for economic aid and was unwilling to allow them to receive arms grants directly. The French informed the United States that the war against the Viet Minh (see Glossary), then in progress, would only be brought to a successful conclusion if the United States furnished military aid directly to the French. A subsequent United States mission in Indochina for the same purpose found itself compelled to make critical compromises between aid consigned to recognized Indochinese regimes and aid to the French for prosecuting the war against the Viet Minh.

Provisions of the 1954 Geneva agreements left intact two important series of treaties concluded with the Royal Lao Government by the United States and France during the 1949-53 period. These agreements were of considerable significance for royal government orientation in foreign affairs after 1954. A Royal Lao Government-United States economic agreement concluded in 1951 (expanded in scope in 1955) remained in 1971 the basis of continued United States backing of the Royal Lao Government's sovereignty and territorial integrity. A second treaty dealing with defense, the Agreement for Mutual Defense Assistance in Indochina, was signed in December 1950 between the United States on the one side and Cambodia, France, Laos, and Vietnam on the other. After hostilities ended in Indochina in 1954 the Royal Lao Government asked the United States to continue its military assistance; this has been done under terms of the "pentalateral" treaty that also remained in force in 1971.

United States conditions for a settlement of Laotian issues adopted at the 1954 Geneva Conference, under which the United

States and its British ally would respect an Indochina armistice, included: preservation of the independence of Laos with the assured withdrawal of Viet Minh forces; no restrictions that would impair the country's capacity to maintain a stable noncommunist regime or adequate internal security forces and its right to import arms and employ foreign advisers; no political provisions that might result in the loss of areas retained under communist control; and provision of effective machinery for international supervision of the agreement.

Withdrawal of French forces after the Geneva Conference created a power vacuum. The upshot of this was formation of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) in Manila on September 8, 1954, by the United States, Great Britain, France, Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Thailand. Among other things, the signatories agreed to recognize aggression by armed attack against Laos (also Cambodia or South Vietnam) as an attack upon any one of them to be met under stipulations of their own constitutional processes. In the event of threats other than by armed attack, the signatories agreed to consult on necessary measures for common defense, but no action would be taken with respect to the Indochinese states except by their explicit invitation or consent.

News of such protection by SEATO was received by the Royal Lao Government with something far short of enthusiasm. Even members of the conservative regime of Katay D. Sasorith (November 1954-February 1956), which had a reputation for a pro-Thailand orientation in foreign policy, expressed reservations about the protection offered by SEATO. The Royal Lao Government was apprehensive that the possible military presence of Thailand in Laos might result in permanent Thai occupation of the country. Another fear was that, with SEATO, there would be international war and Laos would be a battleground.

When discussion got underway on August 1, 1956, between the Royal Lao Government and the NLHS on forming a coalition government, the United States exerted its best effort to discourage the Souvanna Phouma regime then in power from such an undertaking (see ch. 3, Historical Setting). The United States did not favor the undertaking on the grounds that such a coalition government had not been authorized by the Geneva Conference. It soon became apparent, however, that NLHS representation in a coalition government was the price for ending the prevailing factionalism in the country. Despite its reservation concerning the new coalition government, eventually formed in November 1957, the United States nevertheless extended recognition.

In 1958, however, the United States suspended the aid program after the success in a supplementary election of an unexpectedly large number of NLHS candidates to the National Assembly. At least in part as a result, the Souvanna Phouma government was ousted, and a right-wing government took over (see ch. 3, Historical Setting).

Souvanna Phouma returned to office after the August 1960 coup but was ousted in December. Provisional authority was vested in the conservative group under Boun Oum, which was immediately recognized by the United States.

The Soviet Union meanwhile had dispatched a sharply critical note to the United States accusing it of "flouting the sovereign rights" of the Royal Lao Government by openly arming and otherwise supporting the "rebel" Nosavan group. On December 17, 1960, the United States, denying these accusations, countercharged that "the responsibility for the present fratricidal war in Laos. . . rests squarely and solely upon the Soviet Government and its partners." It further reaffirmed its determination to help maintain the sovereignty and independence of Laos and warned again against the subversion or seizure of Laos. On December 19 the United States announced immediate resumption of military aid to Laos, which was now consigned to the newly appointed Boun Oum government. During the United States-Soviet exchange of notes, the Soviet ambassador to Laos, who was then in Phnom Penh where Souvanna Phouma had fled after his ouster, assured the recently deposed premier of continued Soviet support and that he would continue to be regarded as head of the legal government.

From exile in Phnom Penh, Souvanna Phouma in January 1961 gave a series of interviews to the *New York Times* and the *Christian Science Monitor*. He claimed that the United States was blinded by its own erroneous preconceptions about Laos in general and about his ousted neutralist faction's position in particular:

> As with Kong Le, there is a certain accommodation with the Pathet Lao, but the royal troops stay royal troops. . . . How can they (the United States) think I am a Communist? I am looking for a way to keep Laos non-Communist. To be pro-West, on the other hand, does not necessarily mean to be pro-American. To be anti-American does not mean to be pro-Communist. When we say we are anti-American, we are against the American policies of the moment.

Finally, calling for an international conference for the purpose of framing a great-power guarantee of Laos's neutrality, he envisaged his centrist party as the catalyst that would bring the extremist Pathet Lao and Phoumist factions together in a united, national royal Laotian government.

Souvanna Phouma returned to power in June 1962, at the head of a provisional tripartite coalition government. Five months later, the Soviet Union cancelled its military airlift supplying Kon Le's centrist army, which had begun to feud with the Pathet Lao (see ch. 3, Historical Setting). By spring 1963 the supply situation of the Kong Le forces had become critical. On May 12, 1963, the United States announced resumption of military supply deliveries to the Royal Lao Government and, hence, to Kong Le. The United States embassy in Vientiane announced that arms were being supplied to the Kong Le army at the request of the Royal Lao Government.

Whether Souvanna Phouma as prime minister, in view of his own earlier differences with the United States, had personally authorized the provision of United States military supplies for Kong Le was unclear; however, the neutralist ministers were allowed to act in the name of the government in all matters to which Souvanna Phouma did not raise explicit objection.

It has become clear, however, that the Souvanna Phouma regime accepted a gradually increasing degree of United States aid and guidance, especially after the short-lived rightist coup of April 18 and 19, 1964. Souvanna Phouma accepted use of the United States Air Force in a reconnaissance role over Laos, after being convinced of the presence of North Vietnamese troops in eastern Laos, in June 1964. Eventually, he agreed to United States Air Force strike sorties for interdiction of North Vietnamese convoys along the Ho Chi Minh Trail complex and the destruction of Pathet Lao supply dumps on the Plain of Jars (see ch. 14, National Defense and Internal Security). His government, which continued in power in mid-1971, has maintained that it had no choice but to accept arms and ammunition from the United States to defend the sovereignty and neutrality of Laos.

### France

In mid-1971 France maintained a large diplomatic mission in Laos, second only to that of the United States. The French ambassador was reported to wield considerable influence. The French government also maintained a cultural mission in addition to its military one (see ch. 14, National Defense and Internal Security). The cultural mission consisted of several hundred people, the level at which it had been supported since the mid-1960s. Most of its personnel were engaged in teaching and in cultural activities. There was also a French economic and technical mission with over eighty persons on its staff (see ch. 13, Trade and Transportation). Another dozen or so French citizens, employed by the United Nations, acted as advisers to the Royal Lao Government in public administration, planning, health, and labor activities.

Relations with France were presumably strengthened by the dual Laotian-French citizenship held under French law by an estimated 3,000 to 5,000 Lao, who had acquired this status before independence. Included in this total were an estimated 150 in NLHS territory, of whom the most notable was Prince Souphanouvong.

### International Organizations and Agencies

Sponsored by France, Laos applied for United Nations membership in 1952, but it was not admitted until 1955 because of the veto of its application by the Soviet Union. In 1971 Laos was a member of various specialized United Nations agencies: the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations (UNESCO), the Universal Postal Union (UPU), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the International Development Association (IDA), the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), and the International Labor Organization (ILO). It was also a member of the Colombo Plan and the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE). Under ECAFE's auspices, Laos is a member of the Mekong River Development Project of riparian states.

## FOREIGN RELATIONS OF THE LAO PATRIOTIC FRONT

The Lao Patriotic Front (Neo Lao Hak Sat—NLHS) had not been recognized, as of mid-1971, by any foreign country as the legal government of Laos. Moreover, its international contacts have been exclusively with communist countries and foreign communist parties. The foreign contacts of the NLHS have been predominantly with North Vietnam, which played a major role in the original founding and organization of the Pathet Lao movement (see ch. 3, Historical Setting).

The foreign policy position of the NLHS, as described in a November 1968 Pathet Lao News Agency dispatch, echoes the language of the 1962 Geneva agreements. The NLHS declared it would not join any military alliances, permit foreign bases on Laotian territory or the use of Lao territory for purposes of aggression, or accept the protection of any aggressive military bloc. It pledged NLHS "friendship and solidarity" with all peace- and justice-loving countries and support for the "national liberation movements in Asia, Africa, and Latin America" and for "all movements for peace, democracy, and social progress."

The lack of regular diplomatic mission exchanges and the absence of mutual recognition by the "fraternal socialist countries" apparently has not deterred exchanges of official visits by functionaries of these countries. Prince Souphanouvong, the nominal head of the NLHS, and other NLHS officials have been frequent guests in Hanoi, Peking, and Moscow over the years. Early in 1969 the Soviet ambassador accredited to the Royal Lao Government visited Prince Souphanouvong at Samneua. The NLHS conveyed its thanks "to the Soviet people and government for giving aid and support to the national liberation struggle of the Laotian people against the United States imperialists."

NLHS orientation with respect to friction between the Soviet Union and the PRC has remained a matter of conjecture. Until the mid-1960s the NLHS position was characterized as generally favorable to the PRC. Since then, the NLHS seems to have taken an independent position in Sino-Soviet rivalry, apparently because of its virtual domination by North Vietnam. During 1968, however, the NLHS deviated from its customary neutrality on Sino-Soviet differences not involving Laos and expressed its support of the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia. Like the Chinese Communist Party, the NLHS did not attend the world conference of communist and workers' parties in Moscow in June 1969. On the other hand, when Tiao Souk Vongsak of the NLHS Central Committee visited Moscow in August 1970, he attributed the "Laotian people's victories in the struggle against American imperialism and its flunkies" to Soviet aid to the NLHS.

NLHS relations with the PRC were presumably affected in 1971 by the presence of PRC troops engaged in road construction in the northern provinces under NLHS control (see ch. 14, National Defense and Internal Security). The Royal Lao Government originally agreed in 1961 to a road construction program, but the basis for extensions of Chinese road-construction activity in the 1970s in northern Laos has been clouded. Western observers have attributed the expanded program to PRC intentions to create a sphere of influence in northern Laos by further tightening communications with the NLHS, at the same time reducing Soviet and North Vietnamese influence.

Relations between the NLHS and North Vietnam appear to be generally cordial. Public expression of relations not only included the customary effusive exchanges of congratulatory messages on appropriate occasions but also visits of North Vietnamese dignitaries to "liberated zones" of Laos. The funeral of Ho Chi Minh in September 1970 provided an occasion for NLHS expressions of solidarity with North Vietnam. Chairman Souphanouvong, who led an NLHS delegation to Hanoi, took the occasion to consult with his North Vietnamese counterpart, Premier Pham Van Dong. In May 1971 Souphanouvong and most of the top echelon of the NLHS visited Hanoi on an unstated mission.

In spite of these constant reaffirmations of NLHS-North Vietnam solidarity, conflicts have reportedly occurred between the Lao People's Liberation Army and the North Vietnamese forces in Laos. There have been reports of dissension as well as unconfirmed rumors of armed clashes between Lao People's Liberation Army and North Vietnamese troops over the alleged domineering tactics of the North Vietnamese. North Vietnamese resentment over having to subsidize the Laotian troops with men and materiel was intimated by the North Vietnamese ambassador when he visited the premier of the Royal Lao Government in 1969.

NLHS relations with South Vietnam were centered on the Provisional Revolutionary Government in South Vietnam, the political arm of Vietnamese communist insurgents operating in the south. The NLHS has hailed that body as the sole authentic representative of the people of South Vietnam. Various NLHS statements have appeared declaring full support for this group and its political program.

The NLHS has also declared its continuing support for the communist movement in Cambodia as well as for the "struggles" of other Asian peoples against "imperialist" provocations. This included support for the Thai Patriotic Front and the Revolutionary Party for Reunification, which North Korea claimed was struggling against "United States occupationists" in the Republic of Korea (South Korea). Although contacts outside Asia—with the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America—have been limited, the NLHS has effusively reiterated its support of "national liberation" movements in these areas.

The Patriotic Neutralist Forces, a left-wing pro-Pathet Lao splinter of the neutralist Kong Le paratroops, split with the neutralist Souvanna Phouma regime in 1963 and in 1964 pledged its solidarity with the NLHS. It emerged in 1969 as an auxiliary political entity of the NLHS (see ch. 9, Political Dynamics).

A political program of the Patriotic Neutralist Forces adopted in April 1969 included a foreign policy position. Its basic principle was:

> We must not participate in any military group whose aim is aggression and (must) not allow any country to establish bases on Laotian soil. We will have diplomatic relations with all countries of the world, regardless of their political ideology, carrying out trade, cultural, economic, and technical exchanges with those countries on the basis of mutual respect for one another's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity, as well as equal interests, first with all neighboring countries. We must accept and hail all aid without political ties from any country, regardless of its political ideology, in order to rapidly build wealth and strength for our nation.

The Patriotic Neutralist Forces followed the line of the NLHS in declaring its solidarity with North Vietnam in its struggle against the "United States imperialist aggressors." It has claimed to have participated in various international conferences. The forces in 1971 numbered perhaps as few as 200, compared with an estimated 2,000 to 3,000 in the original contingent (see ch. 14, National Defense and Internal Security). Various military actions have been asserted by the NLHS to have been conducted by the Patriotic Neutralist Forces; these were, however, apparently almost entirely operations of the Lao People's Liberation Army.

# SECTION III. ECONOMIC

## CHAPTER 11

## CHARACTER AND STRUCTURE OF THE ECONOMY

In 1971 there were not one but two different economic systems in Laos, reflecting the situation of a de facto divided country. In both parts of the country—one under the control of the Royal Lao Government and one administered by the Lao Patriotic Front (Neo Lao Hak Sat—NLHS)—extensive external assistance enabled their respective economies to function despite civil strife and even to make some economic progress. The assistance from external sources consisted, in both areas, not only of financing but also of major and sustained direct participation by the major donor countries—in the Royal Lao Government area the United States and in the NLHS zone the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam)—with personnel, equipment, supplies, and commodities. In each area the major donor country contributed its assistance under a policy of the planned introduction of social and economic change to foster the modernization of the economy of that area according to its own economic philosophy.

Appraisal of both economies had to be considered in the light of the fragmentary nature, uncertainty, paucity, and sometimes complete lack of data. These statistical deficiencies chiefly reflected the fact of the entire nation's largely nonmonetized economy. These problems were further confounded and intensified by a political and military instability that had led to the breakdown of communications, dislocations in the distribution of population, and disruptions in production.

Both Royal Lao Government and NLHS authorities had shown signs of a keen recognition of the economic difficulties of the areas of the country under their respective control. International observers of the royal government area and those chosen few foreign visitors to the NLHS zone reported that in both areas a sense of determination and optimism seemed to persist simultaneously with a burdensome war that was a perennial threat to economic advance. The economic goals of both administrations seemed to be identical; to achieve for their part of Laos a viable economy free from foreign assistance and capable of its own development while improving the welfare of its people. Observers also noted that the introduction of modern ideas and technologies was resulting in basic changes in attitudes.

These changes in attitudes were impossible to quantify, but the available information seemed to indicate some economic gains, particularly in the field of agriculture, which was by far the most important sector of each economy (see ch. 12, Economic Resources). Double-cropping had been introduced in both the Royal Lao Government and the NLHS areas. On the Royal Lao Government side, where foreign trade movements could be monitored more accurately, imports of rice were beginning to decline in the late 1960s and early 1970s. This phenomenon significantly reflected the efforts that had been made by the Royal Lao Government, aided by substantial foreign assistance.

The United States economic aid mission in Vientiane calculated in 1961 that, of the population under control of the Royal Lao Government, about 1.2 million persons were engaged primarily in subsistence agriculture and 500,000 lived in places where economic activity was largely monetized. No similar data were available for the NLHS area; however, it was reported that efforts to expand the monetized sector of that area were actively underway in 1971 following a "national financial congress' said to have been held in late 1970.

For 1969, for that part of the country under Royal Lao Government control, the aid mission calculated that the gross national product (GNP) was the equivalent of US$211 million and that the GNP per capita was the equivalent of US$73. In 1968, for the same area, the estimated GNP was the equivalent of US$202 million and estimated GNP per capita was the equivalent of US$72. It further estimated that in 1968, among the approximate total population of 1.7 million people under the control of the Royal Lao Government, per capita income in the monetized sector was the equivalent of US$145, or US$870 for the average family of six persons. This estimate included the foreign goods and services that had become available because of stabilization aid supplied by foreign governments friendly to the Royal Lao Government. In the nonmonetized village economy, the mission estimated per capita income in 1968 at the equivalent of US$55.

Military expenditures of the Royal Lao Government in 1968 were the equivalent of US$34 million and amounted to almost 17 percent of the GNP of the area under royal government control. In that year the Kingdom of Laos (Royal Lao Government area) was the only country in the world having a GNP per capita under the equivalent of US$100 to spend over 10 percent of its GNP on defense (see ch. 14, National Defense and Internal Security). In the 1964-68 period the military expenditures of the Royal Lao Government doubled from the equivalent of US$17 million in 1964, and military expenditures as a percentage of the GNP rose from nearly 11 percent to almost 17 percent. The GNP of that part of the country under Royal Lao Government control had risen by about 28 percent in the same period, from the equivalent of US$158 million in 1964 to the equivalent of US$202 million in 1968.

The war had forced the Royal Lao Government to accept substantial annual budget deficits. The royal government has had to support large armed forces and rising numbers of war victims and their dependents (see ch. 14, National Defense and Internal Security). At the same time, losses of territory to hostile armed forces, wartime disruption of commerce, and hindrances to production have weakened the government's revenue base. Unable to meet essential requirements from existing tax receipts, the government has been obliged to borrow from the central bank (the National Bank of Laos) more than 50 percent of its annual appropriations while enacting such tax measures as the political climate would permit (see ch. 8, Political System and Values; ch. 9, Political Dynamics).

The data in the first half of 1971 on the economic structure of the area under NLHS control were fragmentary. The information available did indicate that a fundamental revamping of the economic life of persons under NLHS rule was underway, but how far it had gone was difficult to evaluate. The administrators of the NLHS zone had pressed for economic equality by introducing progressive taxation and by discouraging the conspicuous consumption that established a wealthy villager's status. They claimed to have almost eliminated what they described as the "wasted resources" formerly spent on feasts, marriages, funerals, and traditional celebrations. They had taken what appeared to be initial steps toward the communalization of property by establishing public rice-growing areas and by closely controlling the sale and slaughter of livestock. From the point of view of the villagers living in the NLHS zone, the most onerous aspect of NLHS rule was the sytem of human convoys and work crews (see ch. 5, Health, Education, and Welfare).

Although it seemed clear that NLHS administrators intended ultimately to construct a state on the Asian communist model, available reports indicated that they had been forced by the existing geographic and socioeconomic environment in their area to move with comparative moderation toward this eventual goal. Scholars who had studied conditions in the NLHS zone had concluded that this apparent moderation was the result of the severe physical difficulties encountered in modernizing the part of Laos under NLHS rule, the limited availability from abroad of resources for civilian purposes, and the desire to avoid adverse political repercussions during wartime.

There had been no forced collectivization of agriculture in the NLHS zone but only a slow trend toward mutual aid teams and cooperative management. In the field of trade, there had not been a large-scale expropriation of "capitalists," but restrictions had been placed on trade and the distribution of goods. Administrators appeared to be concentrating on changing attitudes. Obligatory self-criticism and study sessions, in addition to more severe disciplinary measures, were widely used to eradicate what were considered failings arising from "capitalist" or "reactionary feudalist" tendencies (see ch. 4, Social Systems; ch. 9, Political Dynamics). The administrators also appeared to be making a determined effort to raise the level of economic consciousness and to instill in the people under their rule an ambition to achieve an improvement in their average standard of living.

## STRUCTURE OF THE ECONOMY

At the beginning of the 1970s there was a lack of reliable quantitative information concerning the performance of the economy and the contribution of the various sectors. Dependable statistical information is lacking, primarily because the economy is largely nonmonetized and the production of goods and services is not readily measurable in monetary terms but also because of political and military instability.

### Economy of the Royal Lao Government Area

In mid-1967 the first study of the size and structure of the economy of the part of the country under Royal Lao Government control was completed. It was based on information for 1964. The gross domestic product in that year was estimated to be the equivalent of US$167.5 million. The total was achieved by combining the value contributed by the subsistence sector, which was calculated at the equivalent of US$121.2 million, and the value contributed by the market sector, which was equal to US$46.3 million. Based on the total value and the population estimate of 2,572,000, the per capita product for the whole economy was the equivalent of US$65.10.

The importance of the subsistence sector, which continued the traditional rural way of living, was evidenced by the fact that it contributed 72.4 percent to the gross domestic product (GDP) and provided income for about 85 percent of the population. The monetized or market sector contributed 27.6 percent to the gross domestic product and provided income for 15 percent of the population.

Part of agricultural production enters the market economy as the food supply for the urban center population as well as for refugees and those in military service. Forest products are processed domestically and enter into foreign trade along with a few other agricultural products. The industrial sector is small, and mining, conducted by private enterprise, is the most valuable part. The government operates the electric power system, the communications systems, and a considerable part of the transportation facilities. Manufacturing industries, which were small and simple in process, included brickmaking, lumbering, furniture making, handicrafts, and the production of other simple consumer items.

### Economy of the Lao Patriotic Front-Controlled Area

There were no detailed analyses available in the first half of 1971 on the economy of the area controlled by the Lao Patriotic Front (Neo Lao Hak Sat—NLHS). Some descriptions of economic activities were available from the special limited number of foreign observers who had been allowed into the area and from the propaganda broadcasts of the NLHS regime. The foreign observers reported strict self-discipline on the part of the NLHS administrators and their North Vietnamese advisers and an absence of comfort and luxury. Operating from caves and continuously threatened by external bombing, the authorities in the NLHS zone had to administer their economy in the most austere manner possible.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

### Planning in the Royal Lao Government Area

A five-year plan, the Economic and Social Development Plan, 1969-74 (Plan Cadre de Développement Economique et Social, 1969-74), was promulgated on March 31, 1969. Given the uncertainties engendered by the drawn-out hostilities and by the paucity and deficiencies of statistical data, the plan was designed to be "more than indicative but less than imperative," with considerable allowance for flexibility. It represented a broad attempt to eliminate or minimize such structural disequilibria as the preponderance of subsistence agriculture, the underdeveloped state of the manufacturing sector, and the continuing budget and trade deficits (see ch. 12, Economic Resources; ch. 13, Trade and Transportation).

Plan investment was allocated into two broad categories: the basic sector, incorporating twelve major projects; and the general sector, consisting of seventy-nine small projects. The major projects in the basic sector commanded about 82 percent of total planned investment.

Information in 1971 was too vague and fragmented to permit a satisfactory appraisal of the progress of the plan. Some success had been recorded in the development of the Vientiane Plain, which is of the highest priority in the plan. Most of the major projects in the basic sector appeared, however, to be proceeding according to schedule.

### Planning in the Lao Patriotic Front-Controlled Area

Radio broadcasts from the area controlled by the Lao Patriotic Front (Neo Lao Hak Sat—NLHS) have referred to a three-year economic plan carried out in calendar years 1968, 1969, and 1970 and to a new plan for the 1971-73 period. Both plans were stated to have been approved by the Central Committee of the NLHS (see ch. 9, Political Dynamics). A key idea of these programs was to give the NLHS zone and all intermediate levels from the village to the province as much economic self-sufficiency as possible.

One broadcast in April 1971 claimed that under the first plan the population in the NLHS zone had expanded the area of cultivated land and brough under cultivation more wasteland. The area under winter rice, in addition to summer rice, had increased considerably, it was said, (What "winter rice" was, as distinct from "summer rice," was not explained.) In the 1969 / 70 crop, the broadcast stated, the summer crop area was over 75 percent larger than in 1967 / 68, the base figure for 1967 / 68 was not given. The broadcast claimed that water conservation works had been constructed to ensure water for 34,100 acres. Livestock breeding had been increased, it was claimed, and experimental stockbreeding farms operated by the "state" (presumably the NLHS administration) had been established (see ch. 8, Political System and Values; ch. 9, Political Dynamics).

The broadcast claimed further that small industry in the NLHS zone had made "notable progress." In the "past three years" the administration had built sixty-two additional blacksmithing shops, and over 2,000 others "run by the people" had been restored. In addition, nine state-run metalworking shops had been built to provide more farm tools to the peasants. In the same period handicraft establishments had produced nearly 150 tons of salt. Production of earthenware and sugar by handicraft means had also been expanded, it was stated.

## CURRENCY

The kip has been the Royal Lao Government unit of currency since May 1955, soon after the independence of Laos and the creation of the National Bank of Laos, which, functioning as the central bank, assumed note-issuing responsibility. It is a paper currency with multiple conversion rates determined by government decrees. No par value had been assigned by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as of 1971.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, because of the persistent deficits in government revenues and the financing of these deficits by the National Bank of Laos, the money supply increased without a concomitant increase in production of goods and services, resulting in a serious inflationary trend. To correct this situation, a stabilization program was undertaken in 1964 with foreign assistance. The currency was devalued to a basic official rate of K240 per US$1. At the same time a free exchange market was initiated, supported by the contributions of several Western industrialized nations to the newly created Foreign Exchange Operations Fund (FEOF). The official free market exchange rate was K500 per US$1. These exchange rates remained in effect in mid-1971 (see ch. 13, Trade and Transportation).

During the period from August 1960 through June 1962 a series of kip currency with no hard-currency backing was used to pay the officials and troops of the rival administration of Prince Souvanna Phouma and Prince Souphanouvong at Khang Khay (see ch. 3, Historical Setting; ch. 9, Political Dynamics). These notes were rough imitations of the Royal Lao Government currency, known as Vientiane kip, and had been printed in Czechoslovakia. When large numbers of refugees began arriving in Royal Lao Government-controlled territory, the government agreed to convert their "Souvanna kip" at par value for the Royal Lao Government currency.

The NLHS authorities started their own currency, also called kip, in 1962. This currency has been used for payment of monetary taxes in the NLHS area and for other transactions. It was not accepted as legal tender in the Royal Lao Government area and had no known relationship with the United States dollar.

## FINANCE

### Finances of the Royal Lao Government

The Royal Lao Government has had to maintain an extensive and costly military effort, and its budget is dominated by a necessary armed forces expenditure that in itself approximated total governmental receipts (excluding foreign aid). Over half of total budgetary expenditures were for defense and internal security (see ch. 14, National Defense and Internal Security). Of the balance of budgetary expenditures, 45 percent went for public administration, and less than 5 percent was allocated to economic development.

The budget has been marked by chronic deficits, government revenues usually meeting only some 40 percent to 45 percent of expenditures. In each fiscal year (the fiscal year extends from July 1 to the following June 30) from 1965 to 1970 the deficit was larger than total government revenue. The budget deficit was covered for the most part by transfers from the FEOF; the rest was financed by borrowing from the National Bank of Laos.

Considerable potential domestic budgetary revenues have been lost through smuggled imports and uncontrolled reexports (see ch. 13, Trade and Transportation). Ordinary budget revenues are derived from customs duties, fees and, to a lesser extent, direct taxes. Of these sources, over two-thirds are derived from customs duties; and of this sum, between about one-quarter and one-half has come from the duty on gold. Direct taxes provide less than 10 percent of total domestic revenue.

The difficulties in increasing receipts from direct taxes stem from many reasons, among which are the lack of a sufficiently organized and enforceable income tax system, widespread absence of modern bookkeeping practices, general paucity of income records, and the existence of a large nonmonetized sector plagued by military disturbances that tend at times to paralyze the evaluation and collection processes. The most deep-rooted limiting factor, however, is the generally low level of incomes.

### Expenditures

Expenditures are classified in three categories: military, police, and civilian. The military classification, however, does not include all expenditures stemming from internal and external strife, as compensation to war veterans is classified in the civilian category.

Budget expenditures for fiscal year 1970/71 were estimated at K18,273 million (see table 4). These estimates were about the same as expenditure obligations of K18,308 million in 1969/70. Deteriorating security conditions presented an obstacle to fiscal control, and the ability to adhere to estimates was uncertain.

From 1964/65 to 1969/70 civilian expenditures exhibited an upward trend—both absolutely and relatively—rising from K3,165 million in 1964/65, when they constituted about 31 percent of the total, to K8,554 million in 1969/70, when they constituted about 47 percent of the total. The change reflected both an increase in salaries of government employees and an increase in payments to returned veterans. The 1969/70 budget included for the first time an allowance for development expenditures; obligations totaled K515 million.

In an attempt to control finances, the Ministry of Finance in 1969 organized a new department to oversee receipts and expenditures. In 1967, also, it had been proposed that a national commission of accounts should be organized within the Ministry of Finance as a step toward reform of fiscal administration. Effective reorganization of government procedures could not be realized, however, under the existing state of insecurity.

### Revenues

Actual government revenues for fiscal year 1969/70 were

*Table 4. Expenditures and Revenues of the Royal Lao Government, Selected Years, 1964-71*
(in millions of kip)[1]

|  | 1964/65 (actual) | 1969/70 (actual) | 1970/71 estimate) | 1964/65 | 1969/70 | 1970/71 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  | (in percent) |  |
| **Expenditures** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Civilian | 3,165 | 8,554 | 8,173 | 30.7 | 46.7 | 44.7 |
| Police | 761 | 1,220 | 1,231 | 7.4 | 6.7 | 6.7 |
| Military | 6,389 | 8,534 | 8,869 | 61.9 | 46.6 | 48.5 |
| Total | 10,315 | 18,308 | 18,273 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0[3] |
| **Revenues**[2] |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Customs receipts | 2,016 | 5,745 | 5,800 | 60.5 | 70.3[3] | 61.2 |
| Gold import duties | (500)[4] | (1,793) | (1,300) | (15.0) | (21.9) | (13.7) |
| Other import duties | (1,516)[4] | (3,952) | (4,500) | (45.5) | (48.3) | (47.5) |
| Taxes and fees | 826 | 2,432 | 3,673 | 24.8 | 29.7 | 38.8 |
| Extraordinary receipts | 488[5] | ... | ... | 14.7 | ... | ... |
| Total | 3,330 | 8,177 | 9,473 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| **Deficit** | 6,985 | 10,131 | 8,800 | ... | ... | ... |

... not applicable.

[1] K240 equal US$1.

[2] Expenditures are obligations; revenues are final.

[3] Does not total because of rounding.

[4] Estimated division.

[5] Revaluation of inventories.

Source: Adapted from U.S. Embassy in Vientiane, Agency for International Development, Mission to Laos, *Facts on Foreign Aid to Laos*, Vientiane, April 1, 1971, p. 94.

K8,177 million; the draft budget for 1970 / 71 estimated receipts at K9,473 million, an increase of about 16 percent over the previous year. The anticipated increase in receipts estimated for 1970 / 71, if achieved, with the expected slight decline in expenditures, would result in a drop in deficit from K10,131 million in 1969 / 70 to K8,800 million in 1970/ 71.

Ranked according to their monetary value, the sources of government revenue have been indirect taxes, direct taxes, fees from public services, and miscellaneous other receipts. In an unindustrialized economy largely devoted to subsistence agriculture, direct taxes, mainly derived from business and personal income taxes, are relatively unimportant as a source of Royal Lao Government revenue. In 1969, for example, they accounted for only 8.4 percent of the total, in contrast to indirect taxes, which accounted for 83.8 percent. Fees from public services, such as the telegraph and telephone systems and the postal system, constituted 6.3 percent of realized revenue, leaving 2 percent from miscellaneous sources.

Customs duties consistently have been the mainstay of budgetary revenue, gold import duties being the largest single contributor. In fiscal year 1969 / 70 total customs duties accounted for about 70 percent of actual revenue; the estimate for 1970 / 71 allocated about 61 percent of anticipated revenue to customs duties.

Presentations to the National Assembly of the draft budgets for fiscal years 1968 / 69 through 1970 / 71 were accompanied by various tax measures to raise revenue and, it was hoped, to cut down the gap between income and rising expenditures. Most of the new revenue-raising measures in fiscal years 1968 / 69 and 1969 / 70 were rejected, and the benefits from those accepted were diluted in some cases by delays in implementation. To mitigate the inflationary effect of the increased deficit resulting from the rising level of expenditures and the failure to provide more revenue, in December 1969 the government instituted a borrowing program consisting of an offering of bonds to the public. These bonds were to be issued with maturities ranging from three to fifteen years and bearing interest graduated according to maturity. To eliminate an inflationary increase in the money supply, bonds were offered to the public; banks were not eligible to purchase them.

For fiscal year 1970 / 71 the cabinet presented measures to the National Assembly to raise revenue by an increase in the business profits tax and personal income tax, a progressive tax on wages and salaries of the private sector, and an increase in the list of luxury goods subject to a high sales tax. In early 1971 no report was available as to the action taken on these measures.

### Taxation in the Lao Patriotic Front-Controlled Area

According to the information available in the first half of 1971, most of the taxation in the areas controlled by the Lao Patriotic Front (Neo Lao Hak Sat—NLHS) was taxation on the rice crop of each family through taxes known as rice to help the state, trading rice, and rice from the heart. These absorbed approximately one-half of each family's rice crop (see ch. 5, Health, Education, and Welfare).

In 1968 the NLHS began collecting a monetary tax to support the teachers and medical personnel. The tax was progressive and was set as 500 NLHS kip a year for wealthy families, 300 NLHS kip for average families, and 200 NLHS kip for poor families. An additional tax was levied, in effect, in 1968 when the prices for cattle and water buffalo paid by the cooperative stores in the provinces under the control of the NLHS were reduced by from 30 to 40 percent.

## FOREIGN EXCHANGE OPERATIONS FUND

In 1964, upon the advice of the IMF, a consortium of industrialized countries established the Foreign Exchange Operations Fund (FEOF) to assist in stabilizing the financial condition of the Royal Lao Government by providing foreign exchange to bridge the gap between the demand for imports and the amount of exchange supplied by the sale of exports. The original members of the consortium were Australia, France, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Japan joined the group in the following year.

The agreement has been placed on a yearly basis, and bilateral agreements are signed between the royal government and each of the donor countries. The total amount of exchange for the year and the contribution of each participating country are set forth in the agreement. Before the countries renew the agreement, the fiscal performance for the past year is reviewed, and an upper limit is fixed for the budgetary deficit of the coming year. During the period covered by the agreement, representatives of all governments and the IMF resident representative meet monthly to review the situation.

FEOF operates to supply the needs for foreign exchange in the free market in royal government territory. Financing of budgetary deficits by the National Bank of Laos adds to the money supply of the country without increasing the domestic supply of goods available for purchase, thus increasing the demand for imports beyond the ability of exports to finance their purchase. When commercial bank supplies of foreign exchange are exhausted, their supply is replenished by purchases from FEOF, which also sells exchange to four foreign oil companies operating in Vientiane. The kip acquired by FEOF are turned over to the Royal Lao Government at the end of the year and, except for certain amounts reserved by participating countries for specific purposes, are used to retire as much as possible of the government's debt to the central bank, thereby reducing the money supply.

The operations of FEOF have been beneficial to the economy. By making exchange available to banks for sale to the private sector, the rate on the free market was held reasonably steady, and black market operations were reduced. For imports not financed by foreign aid the exchange rate in mid-1971 was K500 per US$1; for other free market transactions the rate has been about K507 per US$1 since 1967. Furthermore, the provision of kip to reduce the government debt to the central bank has curbed the tendency toward inflation.

In addition, the United States has purchased, with part of its contribution to FEOF, and at the basic official rate of K240 to US$1, the kip needed for the local costs of the United States economic aid program. The difference between the K240 rate and what is obtained from the sale of these dollars—about K265 per dollar—is applied to the government's debt to the central bank. From 1967 through June 30, 1971, this arrangement had generated over K8 billion for stabilization purposes.

## THE FINANCIAL SYSTEM IN ROYAL LAO GOVERNMENT TERRITORY

The structure and functioning of the financial system are limited and influenced by the fact that monetary activity is mostly confined to larger cities and towns; in most of the area, production and distribution are effected at a subsistence level and through a barter system. Industry, which needs credit for operation and growth, is in a beginning stage. The export sector of international commerce is small, and imports are financed with the assistance of the developed countries. As industrialization of the royal government area proceeds, there will be need for the diversification of financial services and for the establishment of such institutions as savings and loan associations, finance companies and, perhaps, credit unions. There is no stock exchange and no immediate need for one. The Kingdom of Laos is a member of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD—also known as the World Bank), the IMF, and the Asian Development Bank. The IMF maintains a resident adviser in Vientiane.

In 1969 financial institutions comprised a central bank, a group of commercial banks, three specialized government credit institutions, insurance companies, and private moneylenders. The treasury also functioned as part of the financial system, accepting bank deposits upon which it paid an annual interest of 1 percent.

### Central Bank

The National Bank of Laos, which is the central bank, was created by ordinance in December 1954 after Laos became independent and was therefore no longer a member of the Indochinese Monetary Union. It is wholly owned by the royal government and has headquarters in Vientiane and one agency in Pakse. By statute the bank is charged with the responsibility for contributing to the efficient performance of the money and banking system; the maintenance of monetary stability; the maintenance of a stable rate of exchange; and the development and utilization of resources, including the distribution of credit among the different sectors of the economy.

The central bank is controlled by a general council composed of the governor of the bank, who serves as president of the council; the deputy governor, who serves as vice president; three government members; and three private members. The private members represent industry and commerce, agriculture, and animal husbandry. The governor and deputy governor are chosen by the cabinet. Private members are chosen by the minister of finance upon the advice of interprovincial chambers of commerce and industry. All members except the governor, deputy governor, and inspector general serve for four-year terms. The operations of the central bank are supervised by the controller general and the Commission of Supervisors.

The National Bank of Laos performs most of the functions generally delegated to a central bank. Basically it serves the government and banking systems; it engages in commercial banking operations only to a very limited extent. One of its important functions is the issuance and retirment of currency.

The National Bank of Laos serves as fiscal agent for the government and represents it in transactions with international financial institutions. The bank makes advances to the government and accepts treasury and foreign aid deposits and deposits of FEOF.

In the nongovernment sector the National Bank of Laos supervises the commercial banking system. It regulates the establishment of banks and conducts bank examinations. It functions to control credit expansion through the determination of the legal reserves requirement of the banking system and, in conjunction with the treasury, is a holder of legal reserves. In 1969, to combat inflationary tendencies, commercial banks were required to keep 50 percent to all deposit liabilities as legal reserves. This is one of the highest requirements in the world. From 1964 to 1969 the National Bank of Laos did not provide any credit to commercial banks. Further information was lacking in mid-1971.

## Commercial Banks

At the end of 1969 five commercial banks were in operation—the Bank of Indochina (Banque de l'Indochine), Bank of Tokyo, Bank of Laovieng, Commercial Development Bank of Indochina and the Bank of Vientiane. Two of the banks, the Bank of Indochina and the Bank of Tokyo, are branches of foreign banks; the others are locally established and, at least in part, based on domestic capital. Commercial banks were initiated in 1953, when the Bank of Indochina opened a branch to serve financial needs that formerly had been met through facilities in Saigon, Hanoi, and Haiphong. Three banks were established in 1956 and 1957, and the Bank of Vientiane was established in August 1969.

Local banks are stock companies, organized as corporations, the stockholders electing a board of directors. They are established and operate under the Commercial Banking Act of 1956, which was revised in 1960. The National Bank of Laos exercises surveillance over the commercial banking system. Facilities are largely concentrated in Vientiane; only one bank, the Bank of Laovieng, has a branch in Savannakhet and agencies in Luang Prabang and Pakse.

There are four types of deposits: demand; time; savings, which require the the use of a passbook; and notice, which are essentially short-term time deposits requiring notice for withdrawal. Because of a strong preference for the use of currency, the number of account holders is relatively small. Except for demand deposits, the greatest number are time deposits. No interest in paid on demand deposits, and interest on time deposits is graduated according to the maturity period.

Bank credit is extended mostly for the financing of imports for periods not exceeding three months. Credit is usually backed by some type of collateral; the merchandise covered serves this purpose for imports.

## Other Financial Institutions

The Development Bank of Laos is a specialized credit institution established in 1967 as the successor to the National Credit Bank of Laos (Credit National Lao—CNL), which was initiated in 1956. The government owns 83 percent of the bank, and the other 17 percent is owned by the National Bank of Laos.

The purpose of the Development Bank of Laos is the enhancement of the economic and social development of the country through the promotion of industry, agriculture, handicrafts, trade, livestock raising, and fishing; assistance in the development of cooperatives; and contribution toward financing local and provincial agricultural credit offices. To achieve these ends the Development Bank of Laos was empowered to hold equity shares in both private and public enterprises; make loans and advances and guarantee loans; issue bonds and accept time and savings deposits; and obtain foreign loans and assistance. In 1970 the bank's lending rate was 12 percent.

The Development Bank of Laos is administered by a council of ten, of which the minister of finance serves as ex officio president and the governor of the National Bank of Laos acts as vice president. The other members include representatives from the ministries of finance, rural affairs, national economy, and planning and cooperation; a representative from the national government; one from the National Bank of Laos; and two from other economic and social organizations—which, in 1967, were the vice president of the National Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture and the president of the Interprovincial Chamber of Commerce of Luang Prabang.

The Development Bank of Laos is subject to the requirement of a legal reserve of 50 percent of deposit liabilities, to regulation of the ratio of a loan to the assets of the borrower, and to a ceiling on the interest rate charged on loans. The purpose of the original institution was the extension of medium- and long-term credits ranging from one year to more than five years. In 1961 regulations were revised to permit the extension of short-term credits for one year or less; in 1967, however, medium- and long-term credit accounted for K207 million, in contrast to short-term credits of K69 million.

The Development Bank of Laos has engaged in both lending activities and the acquisition of equity shares. At the end of 1967 loans had been extended mainly to electric power companies and to water companies. No credits had been extended to rural cooperatives or the housing sector; and only inconsequential amounts, to industry and agriculture. Ownership holdings were composed of shares of the Nong Sun Mining Company, the Khammouane Cement Company, the National Hotel, and the Laotian Royal Airline. The future usefulness of the bank will probably be somewhat dependent on an increase of available funds and an increase in trained personnel for administration.

Two other specialized financial institutions have been organized through the cooperation of Laos and the United States. In 1965 the Agricultural Development Organization (ADO) was organized to encourage agricultural development through the financing of fertilizers, insecticides, water pumps, and other productive equipment for farmers (see ch. 12, Economic Resources). From 1965, when it began operation, to 1970 the organization expanded the scope of its activities somewhat.

The Special Fund for the Development of Small Private Industries, usually referred to as the Small Scale Industry Loan Fund, was established in 1967 as a joint venture of Laos and the United States. The purpose is the provision of medium-term loans to small private industries. The fund also guarantees credits, provides advisory assistance, and conducts feasibility studies. It operates as part of the Development Bank of Laos. Resources for the operation of the Small Scale Industry Loan Fund for the first two years were largely supplied by foreign aid funds of the United States and local currency from the trust fund of the United States Agency for International Development (AID). The basic purpose is the provision of capital for industries with export potential and those that are import saving. Among the industries considered for assistance are the logging industry, veneer and plywood manufacturing, tire recapping, textile manufacturing, furniture manufacturing, well drilling, and pump installation.

Insurance companies are not a source of investment capital of consequence in the country, although in 1967 six companies were in operation—two domestically based and four foreign. Vientiane was the head office of all but one company, the Chanhsoth Assurance Company, which was located in Savannakhet. All companies provided general insurance and operated under government supervision.

Private moneylenders provide an unknown amount of credit in both urban and rural areas. They function chiefly in rural areas, where they provide credit to farmers for the purchase of seeds, fertilizers, and other supplies for production. Frequently the lender also purchases the crop after it is harvested. The activities of the ADO in the provision of credit and marketing assistance, however, should reduce the role of private lenders in production and distribution.

# CHAPTER 12

# ECONOMIC RESOURCES

Since the early 1950s plans have been made and programs have been undertaken by the Royal Lao Government in that part of the country under its control to improve the use of resources that have been undeveloped and, in some instances, unexplored and unexploited. Beginning in the 1960s, the Lao Patriotic Front (Neo Lao Hak Sat—NLHS) authorities had also begun actively to organize and direct toward the same end the use of the economic resources in the area under their administration. The pursuit of plans and programs in each area, however, had been handicapped by a lack of domestic capital and, most important, by the risk attendant upon insurgency and a lack of external security.

At the beginning of the 1970s agricultural production throughout the country remained at a subsistence level. Tin was the only mineral produced, but others were known to exist. In all of Laos manufacturing was at a beginning stage, producing only a few kinds of consumer goods made by uncomplicated or sometimes even primitive techniques. The labor force was small and in need of technological training. In spite of persistent disruptions from 1965 to 1971 progress had nevertheless been made that should form the basis for substantial improvement in agriculture, industry, and manpower in the future.

## AGRICULTURE

### Organization and Land Utilization

About 8 percent of the total land area of some 91,000 square miles was considered suitable for agriculture under conditions existing in 1969. The amount of arable land per capita was estimated to be about 1.4 acres.

Agricultural production is carried on by families that live in villages of from fifty to 200 inhabitants; farmers go out from the village to till their fields. Plots are usually about five acres in size; they are, however, sometimes smaller and in some instances are fragmented.

Dual patterns of cultivation affect the living habits of the farm population. Along the plains of the Mekong River and its tributaries, cultivation depends on the natural moisture of the monsoon season from May to October. In this area fields (known as paddy fields) are diked to retain the water and fertile soil, and rice, the crop on which life depends, is planted. Farming communities are permanent here.

In the mountainous areas, where the gradient is steep, a different type of land use exists, and production and settlements are shifting. Here, the farmer chooses a piece of forest land and, at the beginning of the dry season, clears the plot of underbrush and trees, which are then burned. Rice and other crops are planted by primitive methods in the soil that has been enriched by ashes of the burned vegetation. After two or three years of cultivation, crop yields decline, and the process of slash, burn, and plant is repeated on another plot. After a certain length of time, declining productivity of the nearby soil makes it necessary that families and sometimes entire villages move.

For the most part farms are operated at subsistence level outside the monetary economy, rather than as commercial ventures. Much exchange is conducted by barter, although almost all farmers have at least some familiarity with the commercial market.

Output per person is low. The relatively low level of technology, lack of capital, credit, and developed marketing facilities, as well as disruption from the lack of internal and external security, have been obstacles to the expansion and modernization of the agricultural sector. The number of males in military service also has been responsible for a lack of labor that has affected production (see ch. 5, Health, Education, and Welfare; ch. 11, Character and Structure of the Economy).

### Land Tenure

Patterns of land tenure vary widely, resting more on tradition and local custom than on law. This situation apparently also still persisted in NLHS areas, at least in the late 1960s, despite a reported land reform in the 1960s on which data were fragmentary in 1971 (see ch. 5, Health, Education, and Welfare). In the period of absolute monarchy before the Constitution was promulgated, land was considered to be the property of the ruler, who had the right to grant custody and use or to expropriate land. There is no evidence that these rights were used freely. The Constitution of May 1947, as revised and amended to March 19, 1965, does not mention land tenure, and apparently the basic right has not been rescinded.

Individuals, families, communities, and ethnic groups hold land according to local custom. Holdings can be expanded upon requests to local officials and upon payment of necessary taxes and gratuities. Property abandoned for more than three years reverts to the state and is considered to be free. (In NLHS territory, land belonging to persons who flee to royal government areas becomes public property.) Generally anyone who clears free land and cultivates it is considered the legitimate proprietor, a policy that exists in both lowlands and highlands. Because of the shifting character of dry farming, however, land does not remain under specific ownership in mountainous areas for as long periods as in lowlands, where plots are more permanently occupied.

There is very little absentee ownership. In Vientiane Province in 1965 it was estimated that more than 80 percent of rural families owned their ricefields; a few rented from wealthier families under arrangements that varied with the services and facilities provided by the landlord. The Royal Lao Government has attempted to ascertain the exact ownership of land, an important factor in obtaining credit, but little progress has been made because of political disorder and the lack of funds and qualified surveyors. One source reported that the land reform of the 1960s in the NLHS areas had completely eliminated absentee ownership.

## Production

### Rice

Rice, mostly of the glutinous variety, is by far the most important crop. In 1969 there were 537,000 tons of rice produced in the area under control of the Royal Lao Government, an increase from 514,000 tons in 1968. Production has fluctuated from year to year according to weather conditions; in general, however, the production trend has been upward. In 1970 it was noted that some of the improved rice strains were not well adapted to growing conditions in Laos.

Rice production has generally been insufficient to feed the population in the Royal Lao Government area, and it has been necessary to import rice to augment the domestic crop. The problem of providing rice for all has also been complicated by the necessity of feeding the large number of refugees who left their own land and of feeding the army. Despite the introduction of double-cropping in 1967, production continued to be insufficient to meet domestic demand, and about 40,000 tons were imported from Thailand. In 1967 about 575 acres were planted with rice in the dry season. Acreage was increased in the following year, and in 1969 the acreage under double-cropping was estimated to be slightly more than 4,000 acres. In addition to double-cropping, there was also an increase from 1967 to 1969 in the irrigated area under cultivation.

### Other Crops

Among other commodities produced are corn, wheat, cotton, coffee, tobacco, vegetables, and fruits. Corn is a reasonably new crop that is produced in the mountainous areas of the northern part of the country. It is mostly eaten on the cob as a vegetable, although some is used as feed grain. Small amounts are dried and ground, but in the late 1960s the use of corn as a dietary staple did not compete with rice. Wheat has been grown experimentally near Vientiane and on the Bolovens Plateau, but the environment was not propitious for the growth of the grain for flour milling.

Cotton, coffee, and tobacco are traded in domestic markets. The production of cotton, which has been encouraged by French assistance, increased slightly from 2,200 tons in 1967 to 2,500 tons in 1969. Production of coffee, however, declined from 3,700 tons to 3,500 tons in the same period. Tobacco is widely grown on family plots, especially in the Mekong River lowlands and on the Bolovens Plateau. Production of tobacco was encouraged by the establishment of a cigarette factory.

Opium is a major cash crop. Its sale is illegal except under government control, and most of the production is smuggled out of the country. It has been estimated that over thirty tons of opium have been produced annually. Cultivation takes place in areas not under surveillance or control. The long, relatively unguarded boundary of the country encourages smuggling.

Vegetables are grown for family or nearby area consumption. Agricultural studies in Royal Lao Government zones indicate that growth could be diversified and quantity could be increased. Improved transportation and internal security would tend to provide a market and create an incentive for greater production and for development of food-processing industries, which would eliminate the necessity to import canned foods.

### Livestock

Before World War II Laos was an exporter of livestock to the markets in Hanoi, Saigon, and Bangkok. The disruptions of war, however, have resulted in a cessation of exportation and in a lack of growth of the livestock population, which in 1968 was estimated to include 9,500 horses, 357,000 buffalo, 234,000 oxen, 409,000 hogs, and an undetermined number of poultry in the Royal Lao Government-controlled area. Little information concerning livestock in areas outside government control was available at the end of 1970 (see ch. 5, Health, Education, and Welfare). Water buffalo are used as draft animals in areas under wet cultivation, whereas oxen are better suited to the mountainous areas. In some areas water buffalo are also used as food.

### Fishing

Fish abound in the rivers of Laos, particularly in the Mekong and its tributaries, and provide an important source of protein for the population. Partly because of the traditional lack of effort to improve the propagation of fish and partly because of destructive fishing methods, the supply is inadequate to meet the demand, and fresh fish and processed fish products are imported.

Since the mid-1960s increasing the quantity and improving the quality of fish have been goals of the Royal Lao Government. Farmers have been encouraged to raise fish in ponds and ricefields to increase the availability of protein in their diet. To assist in this project by providing fingerlings for stocking ponds, in 1966 the Royal Lao Government, in conjunction with the United States Agency for International Development (AID), undertook the improvement of fish hatcheries. Approximately 110,000 fingerlings, by early 1968, had been produced and sold at the three fish hatcheries of Luang Prabang, Vientiane, and Pakse; the goal was the production and distribution of 2.5 million fingerlings annually.

Under propitious circumstances it might be possible to produce domestically some of the processed fish products that are imported. The uncertainties of the fish supply and of the conditions of processing in the late 1960s and early 1970s, however, were not conducive to extensive investment in such ventures; nevertheless, in 1969 there were eight plants producing almost 2 million bottles of fish sauce, which is an important addition, in the Royal Lao Government zone, to the somewhat monotonous rice diet.

## Forestry

Forests cover about two-thirds of the area, and it is estimated that about half of the forest land has potential commercial value if the problems of transportation can be solved. The difficulties of bringing timber to market are compounded by the fact that there are no railroads and the highway system is not well developed. Logs must be moved over primitive roads and floated down the Mekong River, where falls and rapids present obstacles to efficient transportation. In consequence, the marketing process is slow and costly and frequently results in large losses of logs in transit.

Forest products, which include timber, firewood, and charcoal, are used to fill domestic needs. Teak, the most important wood produced, also contributes to export earnings. In 1969 the value of wood exported was K376.5 million (240 kip equal US$1—see Glossary), or 36.5 percent of total Royal Lao Government export values (see ch. 11, Character and Structure of the Economy). Thailand was an important market.

Benzoin, cardamom, and sticklac, which are secondary forest products, have also contributed to export earnings. Benzoin, a resinous secretion of the styrax tree used in the manufacture of perfume, was exported to France. After 1966, however, the production of benzoin and cardamom (a spice) declined because producing areas were occupied by insurgent forces. Sticklac, another forest derivative used in manufacturing varnish and lacquer, also declined in value as an export after 1965, when the overland route to Vietnam was closed. Since then the production of sticklac has been minimal, and there was no record of its being exported in 1969.

Forests have suffered from the effects of slash-and-burn agricultural methods. An intelligent system of management will be necessary in order to obtain maximum benefits from them as an economic resource. Plans for improvement were incorporated in the Royal Lao Government and Social Development Plan, 1969-74.

The first step in carrying out the plan was to be the making of an inventory by photographing and mapping existing forests. This project was started in March 1968 and was expected to continue throughout the life of the economic development plan. The areas around Vientiane, Savannakhet, Luang Prabang, and Paksane were given priority.

## Role of the Royal Lao Government

The government, through the Directorate of Agriculture of the Ministry of National Economy and Planning, has taken an active role in the formulation and implementation of all programs designed to improve the productivity and performance of the agricultural sector. Programs for the improvement of agriculture are given priority in the Economic and Social Development Plan, 1969-74, just as they were in the unimplemented plans adopted in 1952 and in 1959. Because of the lack of domestic capital and of an adequate supply of trained personnel most programs have been undertaken jointly by the Laotian government and foreign governments or agencies. The lack of security has been an obstacle in the full realization of projects undertaken.

In 1956 the Royal Lao Government and the forerunner of AID entered upon a joint program for the benefit of agriculture. The major goal was the increase of rice production through the use of better seed varieties. In 1965 a further step was taken, and a semiautonomous organization was initiated to facilitate the program. In April the Agricultural Development Organization (ADO) was established by an agreement between the Laotian government and AID, and in October ADO was formally created by a decree issued by the prime minister. The organization was intended to make the conduct of projects of the agricultural program more businesslike. Again, the program was centered on an increase in rice production.

Increasing productivity through the use of modern technology was the objective of ADO. The program developed by steps, beginning with the distribution of improved seeds in 1965. In 1967 the use of fertilizer, insecticides, and small tools was added, and small irrigation pumps for water management were introduced to make possible the realization of benefits from new seed and fertilizer. Because a large proportion of the potential labor force was absorbed by military service, experiments in the use of machinery as a supplement to available manpower were undertaken. Between 1967 and 1969 ADO imported and sold to farmers at subsidized prices 230 small irrigation pumps and 100 tractors. The government encouraged the setting up of cooperatives to share equipment, and AID provided training in its use.

ADO devised a system whereby credit was extended to farmers for the purchase of inputs to implement projects undertaken. The length of time for repayment of loans varied from six months to three years. Some types of loans carried interest, although a few were interest free. Repayment for improved seed distributed was made in paddy (unmilled rice) at the end of the harvest; other loans could be repaid either in paddy or in kip. In October 1968 ADO had 10,424 individual loans with a total value of K108.9 million outstanding.

ADO also has made contributions to more efficient marketing. Among the projects undertaken were the construction of warehouses for grain storage, the improvement and expansion of rice milling, and the collection and dissemination of information concerning prices and other phases of marketing. The major problems of efficient marketing concern the need for a workable transportation system and the need for security.

In addition to the projects undertaken by ADO, the Royal Lao Government and AID were involved in a number of irrigation projects of small or moderate size. Laos also expected to profit agriculturally from the development of the lower Mekong River basin, a major project affecting the countries adjacent to the Mekong.

In 1966 the government entered into a farm pilot project with the government of Japan at Tha Ngon, about sixteen miles north of Vientiane. At this experimental farm, research in plant diseases, livestock care, and fish breeding is conducted. An eventual goal is to double the size of the farm, which was fifty acres in 1970, and to provide extension services to farmers.

## INDUSTRY

Industrialization is at a beginning stage. The growth of industry is proceeding slowly because of a number of obstacles, including inadequate knowledge of natural resources, lack of domestic capital, and an underdeveloped transportation system. Further restraining factors of great importance are the lack of security and the lack of a pool of skilled workers and experienced managers. Programs to encourage the growth of industry have been planned and undertaken in both Royal Lao Government and NLHS areas (see ch. 11, Character and Structure of the Economy).

## Mining

In 1970 the only mineral under commercial exploitation in royal government territory was tin, which was the most valuable export commodity. Other minerals were known to exist but had not been exploited (see ch. 2, Physical Environment and Population). No information was available on mining in the NLHS areas.

Tin has been mined by traditional hand methods for hundreds of years, but commercial mining began about 1930 with the operation of mines near Khammouane (Thakhek) by a French company. Phontiu, the largest mine, was later purchased by another French company in 1954 and remained the sole producer of tin-in-concentrate until 1966, when the Nong Sun mine, a joint Laotian and French venture, was opened. From 1961 to 1966 production of the Phontiu mine ranged from 578 to 720 tons. In 1966 new machinery was installed, and production increased to 1,115 tons in 1967. With the opening of the Nong Sun mine, total production of tin-in-concentrate rose to 1,262 in 1969.

Mining activities in Royal Lao Government areas are under the supervision of the Central Service for Mines within the Ministry of National Economy. Responsibilities of the Central Service for Mines include the coordination and processing of information from surveys. In 1966 the Laotian phase of a survey of the mineral potential of the countries of the lower Mekong River basin was initiated. A team from Japan also conducted a survey for minerals in 1967 and 1968. Plans for exploring, mapping, and exploiting mineral resources are an integral part of the Economic and Social Development Plan, 1969-74.

## Electric Power

Public power systems in the Royal Lao Government areas are owned by a governmental agency, Electricity of Laos (Electricité du Laos), having responsibility for the operation and maintenance of publicly owned powerplants and for the retail sale of power. Planning for future development of the system, particularly for power generation by hydroelectric stations, was centered in the office of the commissioner of the plan and was carried on in consultation with Electricity of Laos.

Public electric power is used in major urban centers, including Vientiane, which is the largest market, Luang Prabang, Savannakhet, Pakse, Khammouane, and Saravane. At the beginning of the 1970s there were no transmission lines connecting urban centers because power demands were limited. Studies undertaken indicated no immediate need for extension to rural areas. In 1969 a project was initiated to improve the distribution system at Vientiane, and projects were planned for other urban centers in the future. Power is also generated by installations of private institutions.

Most power is generated by thermal plants that use imported diesel fuel oil, which raises the cost of power production. To alleviate this situation and improve the use of resources in the total area, the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) undertook a study of the lower Mekong River basin in 1951 to determine the feasibility of developing flood control, irrigation, and electric power for Cambodia, Laos, South Vietnam, and Thailand. As a result of this investigation, in 1957 the governments of the concerned countries, with the assistance of ECAFE, formed the Committee for Coordination of Investigations of the Lower Mekong Basin, and gradually a program evolved for water use.

As a result, several projects for the expansion of electric power for Laos were underway in the late 1960s. A hydroelectric project located about twenty miles north of Pakse on the lower Se Done River was one of the first. It consisted of a dam and power station with three generating units. The powerplant, with a capacity of 2,200 kilowatts, was finished in early 1970 and included transmission lines to Pakse. Financing was provided by Laos and France. Another hydroelectric installation, including a dam and power station, was started in 1969 at Nam Dong, just south of Luang Prabang.

A still larger project was inaugurated about fifty miles north of Vientiane on the Nam Ngum River. The project consists of a dam, a bridge, a transmission line from Udon in northeastern Thailand to the Nam Ngum River Dam to permit transfer of power between the two countries, and a power station with an initial installed capacity of 30,000 kilowatts. The bridge and the transmission line from Udon to Vientiane were completed in 1968, and the other facilities were expected to be finished by 1972. The execution of the Nam Ngum installation is administered by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD, also known as the World Bank). The cost of the project was estimated to be about US$31 million. Financing was provided by grants from the United States, Japan, the Netherlands, Canada, Thailand, Australia, Denmark, France, and New Zealand. Completion of power projects should make it possible to lower the price of electric power.

At the beginning of the 1970s feasibility studies were underway for further development of the mainstream of the Mekong River to provide irrigation facilities and electric power. The Pa Mong project, located a short distance upstream from Vientiane, envisioned a storage dam providing irrigation potential for more than 2 million acres of land in Laos and Thailand and a power capacity of from 2 million to 4 million kilowatts. On the basis of aerial photography and mapping, detailed studies were initiated in 1967. Planning was on a long-term basis and, if the project should be consummated, it is estimated that it would be one of the largest river basin developments in the world.

From 1957 to 1968 installed power capacity in that part of Laos under the control of the Royal Lao Government rose from 1,700 kilowatts to 10,600 kilowatts, and production rose from 3.4 million kilowatt-hours to 26.2 million kilowatt-hours. It was estimated that installed capacity rose to 12,000 kilowatts in 1969. In that year Vientiane received 16.9 million kilowatt-hours of electric power from Thailand, to be repaid in kind upon completion of the Nam Ngum project.

An extreme shortage of electric power has been reported in the NLHS zone. Where available, it is provided by small portable generators.

### Construction

Detailed, comprehensive information concerning construction was lacking in 1971, partly because a considerable portion of construction, especially rural, is undertaken on a self-help basis and hence is unrecorded. There is more knowledge of urban construction, but it also is incomplete. In 1965 the construction of houses, mostly rental, contributed to a boom in the building industry, and in 1968 housing construction was continuing. In 1966 an impressively large building was constructed in Vientiane for the Ministry of Finance. According to statistics made available by the Directorate of Housing and Town Planning and the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, there were eighty-seven construction permits issued in 1969; of this number, all but nine projects were to employ durable materials, such as cement and iron.

From 1966 to 1969 various projects, including airstrips and schools, were undertaken in Royal Lao Government areas; some were completed. Elementary schools were built and opened throughout these areas, and in 1967 construction of a secondary school in Vientiane was begun. School construction has also been reported by the NLHS (see ch. 5, Health, Education, and Welfare). The most important projects in Royal Lao Government territory were the Nam Ngum River Dam and power station and the Nam Dong hydroelectric project, both of which were started in 1969.

Almost all major construction projects have been undertaken with foreign assistance.

Public works projects were also undertaken during the last half of the 1960s. In 1968 the road between Vientiane and Savannakhet was in use, and a road connecting Vientiane and Luang Prabang was completed; both were built with foreign assistance. In the following year, however, they were damaged and required rebuilding.

## Manufacturing

Manufacturing in both Royal Lao Government and NLHS zones is mostly confined to the production of light consumer goods using domestic raw materials or of goods that are import substitutes. Industries have not increased rapidly, partly because of the small size of the domestic market, the lack of capital and of trained management, and the lack of security. The intricacies of establishing a company in Royal Lao Government areas have also been an obstacle and have contributed to a slower growth of plants there.

The privilege of industrial investment in the Royal Lao Government zone is granted by the Commission of Mines and Industries within the Planning Commission of the Ministry of National Economy. Decisions are based on recommendations of other governmental entities also. Ultimately the cabinet must approve all industrial projects, whether public or private. For those industries accepted as desirable, tax exemptions for the first five years of operation and exemption from duty on capital imports are granted. The Small Scale Industry Loan Fund and the Development Bank of Laos were established to assist in financing industrial enterprises. In 1970, however, the assistance actually was limited.

In 1969 in the Royal Lao Government areas—ranked by the number of establishments,—saw mills, mechanized rice mills, printing establishments, brick factories, ice and ice cream factories, and distilleries were the most important manufacturing industries. Other industries included plants manufacturing cigarettes, matches, plastic bags, rubber sandals, shoes, candles, soft drinks, bottled oxygen, plastic household products, detergent powder, barbed wire and nails, and knit underwear. A large proportion of plants were established in Vientiane. Most of them were small in size, and many were artisanal projects employing only two or three workers.

In the 1960s and early 1970s manufacturing in the NLHS zone was carried on under very difficult conditions (see ch. 5, Health, Education, and Welfare). To hide the smoke that might lead to bombing, modern and traditional pharmaceutical products were made at night in straw huts. Pharmaceutical products were also manufactured in caves, and iron works were also located in caves. The NLHS was producing domestic appliances, farming implements, and knives, using raw material obtained from the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam) or, locally, from unexploded bombs and used trucks. Spinning mills and weaving factories, also located in places considered safe from bombing, produced materials both for dresses and for uniforms. An NLHS spokesman said in March 1970 that the NLHS area had "a few" small factories and weaving, printing, and mechanical shops.

### Role of the Royal Lao Government

The government plays a direct role in industry only through the production of electric power by the government-owned Electricity of Laos. The major roles are indirect, including the regulation and encouragement of industry and the planning for present and future use of industrial resources. These functions are conducted through governmental ministries and the appropriate departments included within them.

The ministry most involved in performing these functions for industry is the Ministry of National Economy. In 1969 an acting minister had been appointed to fill this position because of the continued absence of the duly appointed member, who refused to serve in the government (see ch. 8, Political System and Values; ch. 9, Political Dynamics).

The division of handicrafts and industry is lodged in the Ministry of National Economy. The ministry, through related internal divisions, supervises industrial activities, grants permits for industrial investment and the establishment of firms, and coordinates and evaluates the findings of industrial studies. The ministry also is responsible for the formulation of long-range plans for the development of all industrial sectors.

To further the plans for industrial development, a new investment law providing tax incentives and tariff protection for desired industries was promulgated by the government in February 1970. The purpose of the law, which was more liberal than a preceding one of similar character, was the encouragement of both domestic and foreign industrial investment.

In addition, the government makes a major contribution to the development and direction of industry through collaboration with foreign and international entities in the preparation and implementation of industrial studies. Membership in the Committee for Coordination of Investigations of the Lower Mekong Basin is an illustration.

# LABOR

## Structure and Dynamics of the Labor Force

In all of Laos the 1969 labor force for ages ten and above was estimated from Royal Lao Government statistics to be approximately 1,335,000, or about 45 percent of the total population of 2,962,000, and about 69 percent of the working age group (persons ages ten to fifty-nine) was estimated to be 1,937,000. Included were personnel in the armed forces (both regular and irregular, in all parts of the country) as well as workers employed in agriculture only at peak periods of agricultural activity and in small handicrafts, whether they were paid or were unpaid family workers. These labor force participation rates (the proportion of a population group classed as economically active) reflected the country's basic dependence on subsistence agriculture, which generally required the labor of all family members. Shortages of manpower, because of the absence of large numbers of young men in the armed forces, were filled by women and children. Participation by women in the rural labor force usually followed a seasonal pattern that was related to the highly labor intensive planting, transplanting and harvesting of rice. Labor force participation of children ages ten to fourteen was high; at least two-thirds of school-age children did not attend school, and most of those who did attend left school before completing elementary grades (see ch. 5, Education, and Welfare).

An estimated 80 percent of the country's total labor force was employed in agriculture, fishing, and forestry. About 10 percent of the labor force were members of the armed forces, and about 2 percent were engaged in civilian government employment. No reliable estimates were available on the distribution of the labor force. Probably 2 percent were in the secondary sector (manufacturing, public utilities, and construction), and another 6 percent were in the tertiary sector (transportation, commerce, and nongovernment services). Many farmers and their families possessed handicraft skills that supplemented returns from farming. Most farmers lived in villages, which often were trading centers for the surrounding area, and many of their inhabitants earned a significant part of their living from trade.

More detailed information was available on the manpower resources of that area controlled by the Royal Lao Government. This information cited the number of people of working age and the distribution of the population and work force between the monetized and subsistence sectors of the economy in the Royal Lao Government areas. In 1970 the estimated total population under the control of the Royal Lao Government consisted of about 1.2 million persons, who were engaged primarily in subsistence agriculture, and 500,000 persons who were in the monetized sector.

This total population in the Royal Lao Government areas included about 280,000 refugees, who were a part of the subsistence sector. On the basis of an estimated 42 percent of the population under fifteen years of age and 4 percent over fifty-nine years of age, the balance of 54 percent of the population under Royal Lao Government control, or 920,000 persons, made up the total labor force in the Royal Lao Government areas. One-half of this total, or 460,000 persons, were males. Slightly over 20 percent of the males, or about 95,000 men, were in the armed forces (regular and irregular combined) (see ch. 14, National Defense and Internal Security).

Military demands on the work force under Royal Lao Government control have made male workers comparatively scarce in the Royal Lao Government areas, and the kingdom has attracted a substantial number of foreign workers who had the skills required by the monetized sector that were not yet sufficiently available from the indigenous labor force. In the most recent sample census available in mid-1971, the proportion of foreigners in the population was particularly high for Vientiane (27 percent) and Pakse (28 percent); Savannahket had about 14 percent, and Luang Prabang had about 10 percent.

In that part of the country controlled by the Royal Lao Government, the lesser educated persons who entered the labor force with a qualification of sixth grade or less were absorbed into nongovernmental employment, where they were preferred over the much larger numbers of unskilled workers. The quality of the kingdom's labor force was constantly being improved by education. The strong demand for education, reflected in the growing numbers enrolled in school, indicated that the people in the Royal Lao Government areas believed that education gave them an advantage in life and provided a way to success (see ch. 5, Health, Education, and Welfare).

In 1970 less than 1 percent of the labor force in the Royal Lao Government areas was estimated to be in the professional, technical, administrative, and management groups. Over one-half of these were teachers, and many were nonindigenous persons. Over one-half of the wage and salary earners were employees of the government or the United States economic aid mission, and the remainder was distributed fairly evenly among services, manufacturing and mining, and construction.

The rate of unemployment in that part of the country under Royal Lao Government control was in 1970 probably less than 1 percent of the labor force. In 1968, however, the government had admitted that secondary school graduates, formerly absorbed into governmental service, primarily as teachers, were having trouble finding suitable employment because of a lack of job opportunities outside the government and despite the steady climb in the number of teachers (see ch. 5, Health, Education, and Welfare). In 1971 it was estimated that in the Royal Lao Government areas Laotian workers with a sixth-grade-or-better schooling were increasing in numbers twice as fast as the 6 percent a year rate growth of the monetized sector. Government employment had earlier offered a good market for those entering the labor force with secondary education or advanced training; in the 1960s the civil service had been growing at about 3 percent per year (see ch. 8, Political System and Values). The government could in the 1960s employ the secondary school and university graduates, but this might not be the case in the 1970s if a more rapidly growing number of these workers outstripped a more slowly growing governmental sector.

A more serious problem would exist if large numbers of men were demobilized from the armed forces, because not all would return to their villages, and urban areas would not offer enough jobs to absorb them. Underemployment, on the other hand, was extensive in the Royal Lao Government areas. The bulk of the labor force, largely self-employed, and family workers engaged in subsistence or semisubsistence agriculture are fully employed only part of the year.

In 1970 no official estimates of the labor reserve had been made public. In 1965, however, there were estimated to be between 50,000 and 60,000 males ages ten and above outside the labor force, chiefly students and monks. The nonstudent female population in this age group was estimated at around 890,000; many already were in the labor force. In the mid-1960s the only sizable unutilized body of manpower existed within the underemployed agricultural labor force, available in periods of slack agricultural activity.

Relatively low military pay and allowances have made it difficult to meet the manpower demands of the armed forces, and it has been difficult for the government to enforce its conscription law, which required all able-bodied male citizens ages nineteen to forty-five to serve in the military forces for one year (see ch. 14, National Defense and Internal Security). In contested areas, the commanders have simply taken the manpower they need as they find it. The number of persons available for service at any one time, however, is affected by the need for agricultural labor during the planting and harvesting seasons.

Voluntary migration to seek permanent employment did not seem to have played a major role in the dynamics of the labor force. Migrants from large villages with schools were usually of a relatively higher educational level and might find permanent jobs in government employment or in white-collar jobs in private enterprise. The armed forces and the police also attracted the rural migrant. Occupational mobility in the rural areas was, however, quite low.

### Characteristics of Labor

Statistics on the number of skilled, semiskilled, and unskilled workers were not available in mid-1971. Some skilled workers could be either trained on the job or, when necessary, imported from neighboring countries (usually Thailand). Use of unskilled labor and labor-intensive methods of work predominated in all branches of economic activity, particularly construction.

Shortages of Laotian manpower in the professional, technical, and skilled categories in the past meant considerable dependence on highly trained and skilled nonindigenous manpower. This was largely a result of a French policy of importing Vietnamese skilled labor and because of the lack of sufficient training facilities after independence. Thai, Chinese, and Vietnamese (the three largest nonindigenous ethnic groups), together with small numbers of Indians, Pakistanis, Cambodians, Filipinos, and Europeans, have constituted a high proportion of the skilled labor force. Some United States nationals were found also in 1971 in key professional or advisory positions in some government departments as well as in the United States economic aid mission. The ethnic Lao were not found often in positions of authority in the private sector because those with sufficient education entered government or military service and most others had not yet acquired the educational level or ability to accept more than first-line supervisory responsibility (see ch. 4, Social Systems; ch. 8, Political System and Values). Excluding government employees, 50 to 60 percent of the skilled and professional workers were foreigners in the mid-1960s.

A Laotian characteristic that affects conditions on the job is the importance given to what is considered an enjoyable working situation (often referred to as the *muan*). One result of this is that employees in a shop tend to form a relatively homogeneous social group. This leads to one shop being largely Thai; another, Vietnamese; and another, Black Tai (see ch. 4, Social Systems). Another result is that groups form rather close-knit cliques that can develop into either cooperative efforts or can concentrate on personal or family interests. A primary factor in an employee's length of service, therefore, is his ability to blend in with the group.

The social necessity for good working relations also leads to mediocrity. The high value attached to social acceptability lowers competitiveness. No one wants to be conspicuously better than others, yet each person does want to further his personal or family gain, and such incentives are gradually breaking down this characteristic.

### The Labor Code

In the Royal Lao Government zone the labor code in effect in 1971, which was adopted in 1967, replaced the French Indochina Labor Code—a series of decrees, orders, and regulations that came into force between 1929 and 1937 under the French administration. The Labor Code of 1967 was better adapted to Laotian conditions than the French Indochina Labor Code, which largely drew on experiences in France and other more developed countries. The 1967 code, however, was in practice largely ignored because much of it was still not well suited to Laotian situations and because workers and employers were not well informed as to its provisions. Moreover, enforcement was weak. A new labor code with accompanying regulations had been prepared as of mid-1971 but was not expected to go into effect for some time.

The 1967 code prohibited forced labor; provided a legal basis for labor and trade associations; prescribed conditions for work contracts and their abrogation; regulated apprenticeship and collective bargaining agreements; regulated methods of determination and payment of wages and salaries, nightwork, and employment of women and children; and determined holidays, rest days, and working and health conditions. The 1967 code established a system of workmen's compensation to cover occupational diseases and industrial accidents and provided a legal basis for the Department of Labor—established in 1965—in the Ministry of Social Welfare. The code also provided a basis for dealing with grievances and labor disputes. In addition to the Labor Code of 1967, a number of ordinances and decrees governed the employment of foreigners.

Because the labor laws were not fully publicized and the agency enforcing them was ill equipped, with only a small staff and a minuscule budget, enforcement was far below standards achieved in other countries of Southeast Asia. Of the five people employed in the Department of Labor, only the director himself had conducted inspections of workplaces. There were no inspections in 1969, and only ten were conducted in 1968. Factors contributing to the low level of enforcement also included the Royal Lao Government's preoccupation with prosecution of the war, the small number in wage employment (outside the United States missions and the government), the small size of individual establishments, and the relatively underdeveloped condition of many economic sectors. Employers in foreign-owned enterprises, in the presence of a shortage of skilled workers, preferred to maintain a stable, qualified work force and generally exceeded legally required standards.

## Employment Practices

Employers rarely investigate job applicants before employing them. When such investigation takes place, it is informal because facilities for verification are limited largely to the police or, in rural areas, to the personal knowledge of village or district chiefs. References usually are requested from skilled or professional applicants. Such documents frequently have seen much wear and tear. Employers report they they are often creased and folded over many times and that the handwriting is often illegible. To verify an applicant's educational background is difficult, particularly with regard to college or university training, which in most cases is acquired outside Laos (see ch. 5, Health, Education, and Welfare). The problem of ascertaining educational background may be less difficult in the case of secondary or primary schools, particularly if the applicant is a recent graduate of a Laotian school.

In nearly all cases, a heavy burden of proof rests with the prospective job applicant, who is usually asked to furnish the requisite documents to his prospective employer. Generally, these are documents such as a Royal Lao Government identification card or Laotian residence permit.

Persons seeking work usually find jobs through their own efforts, and employers recruit workers as needed. Private employment agencies are illegal, and there is only one public employment office. Most employers depend on recommendations from present or past employers, from relatives, or from friends who have personal knowledge of the work under consideration. Employers may occasionally advertise job openings in the newspapers. Such announcements are usually for skilled or professional occupations—for example, electricians to repair and maintain air conditioners, accountants, bookkeepers, engineers, and mechanics. Because there is a serious shortage of qualified specialists and technicians in all skilled trades and professional occupations, many large firms must recruit such personnel from foreign countries through branch offices of their firm in neighboring countries. The skilled or semiskilled educated and qualified Laotians who may be available generally prefer to work for the Royal Lao Government, which they feel provides a greater degree of job security and opportunity for promotion.

The *cai* (labor contractor), a holdover from the days of the French rule, is sanctioned by the Labor Code of 1967. Construction is the only industry where the system is significant. Under this system workers customarily are hired through the *cai*, who knows where they can be obtained. The *cai* often works alongside the members of his gang, usually as foreman. The employer usually pays the *cai* a lump sum or a piece rate from which the *cai* deducts his fee and pays the workers. The Japanese used the *cai* system for recruiting workers on the Nam Ngum River Dam project, but they paid the *cai* only a bonus. The workers were paid directly by their Japanese employers. The *cai* served as a channel for workers' grievances in addition to their responsibilities for recruiting, maintaining, and supervising the labor force.

A further source of workers is the village chief, who often maintains a registry of able-bodied villagers. These workers are hired only for a fixed period and for a specific project. Practice with regard to writing of contracts is not standardized, and notice of separation—either by employee or employer—is rare.

There is one public employment office, which is maintained in Vientiane by the Department of Labor in the Ministry of Social Welfare. The service is utilized by large employers and serves as a source of recruitment for work on various projects in the Mekong River valley. The office is small and does little to provide testing and other services needed to identify skills of applicants or to assure proper placement. The office enters the name, address, and information on the experience and education of an applicant on a registry card that may be consulted by prospective employers.

Hiring for the Royal Lao Government is done through advertising in the newspapers. Candidates must prove that they have the necessary qualifications by showing the appropriate work records and diplomas or other evidence of education. The Royal Lao Government, in its hiring practices, attempts to give preference to veterans (see ch. 14, National Defense and Internal Security).

An office of the United States economic aid mission assisted the Japanese contractors to employ Laotian workers on the Nam Ngum River Dam and other public works projects. Of 4,000 applicants, about 1,200 were hired through this office. To qualify, they had to provide information on their village origin, age, marital status, primary and secondary skills, and work experience. A testing program was used to select those workers with the most relevant aptitudes.

The United States economic aid mission is the largest employee outside the Royal Lao Government itself. At the end of November 1969 the mission employed 3,620 Laotians and 475 third-country nationals. United States policy requires that preference be given to the best qualified Laotians; often, however, third-country nationals must be employed because of severe shortages of local workers with the necessary skills.

### Labor in the Lao Patriotic Front-Controlled Area

Information on labor practices and conditions in regions controlled by the Lao Patriotic Front (Neo Lao Hak Sat—NLHS) was scanty, obtained largely through refugee statements. There appeared to be a general shortage of labor, in part because of conscription for the armed forces and the portage system (see ch. 5, Health, Education, and Welfare). As in other Asian communist countries, impressed labor was the major source of manpower for all economic activities except agriculture.

## CHAPTER 13

# TRADE AND TRANSPORTATION

Although, in effect, there were two separate economies in Laos in 1971—one in the area under the control of the Royal Lao Government and the other in the area administered by the Lao Patriotic Front (Neo Lao Hak Sat—NLHS)—they shared common problems in the conduct and movement of trade. The problems were largely the result of the location of the country and its terrain, the underdeveloped state of transportation facilities, and the lack of security.

The extreme difficulty of internal transport has been described as the single most serious economic handicap faced by both areas. The lack of a good transportation system was a serious obstacle to the flow of commodities and discouraged production beyond the subsistence level.

Both areas were heavily dependent on externally supplied commodities for the maintenance of the existing economic structure and, where security conditions allowed, its improvement. Monetary calculations of the value of the economic assistance furnished by, or funneled through, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam) to the NLHS zone were not available. The Royal Lao Government area, however, regularly recorded an annual value of imports substantially outweighing that of exports, with the surplus financed by external assistance.

In that part of the country under the control of the Royal Lao Government a dichotomy existed between rural and urban trade. In the rural sectors of the area the trading pattern was predominantly one of barter, and goods and services were exchanged with a minimal use of money. In the urban centers, demand for goods was largely filled by imports and was conducted within the money economy.

Little information was available on trade and transportation in that part of the country controlled by the NLHS. The administrators of this area had established cooperative purchasing agencies and retail outlets at the commercial centers of the provinces under their control. Most of the goods sold were rationed, and most reportedly were from North Vietnam or the People's Republic of China (PRC). A separate cooperative network was operated for the armed forces in the NLHS zone (see ch. 14, National Defense and Internal Security).

## FOREIGN TRADE OF THE ROYAL LAO GOVERNMENT AREA

### Background of Trade

In 1968 (the latest year for which complete information was available) the value of foreign trade for the Royal Lao Government area, excluding the gold trade, was K14,327 million (240 kip equal US$1—see Glossary). The value of trade had increased each year from 1965 to 1968, and preliminary estimates for the first nine months of 1969 indicated a continued rise. The annual rate of increase, however, had exhibited a declining trend from 1966, when total recorded trade of K10,375 million exceeded the 1965 total of K8,133 million by 28 percent, to 1968, when trade valued at K14,327 million exceeded K12, 861 million in 1967 by only 11 percent. The official recorded value of trade does not reflect its complete value as considerable smuggling, particularly of opium and gold, is carried on across the country's borders.

Foreign trade has been characterized by chronic deficits of considerable size. Before independence France had exercised complete control of foreign trade and customs, and the trade deficit was financed by the surplus of other units of Indochina or directly through the French colonial budget. Since independence the excess value of imports over exports has been financed by direct cash grants from foreign countries or through commodity import programs maintained by various countries. In the second half of the 1960s deficits ranged from 97 percent of total trade value in 1965 to about 89 percent of the total in 1968.

There are a number of fundamental obstacles to the development of a balanced, growing foreign trade. One of the most important is that Laos, as a landlocked country, has no seaport, and international commerce must be conducted through a neighboring country, which emphasizes the importance of good relations with adjacent political entities. Transportation through a foreign country adds to the cost of imports, and added transportation charges handicap the competition of exports in the world market. At the beginning of the 1970s most imports passed through Bangkok, as other routes were closed or vulnerable to attack in the times of conflict. Lack of adequate internal transportation also adds to the cost of movement of commodities entering foreign trade and to the length of time required for their collection or distribution.

The adverse trade balance is compounded by the narrowness of the export base developed, measured against the need to import almost all manufactured commodities. This imbalance could be modified somewhat by agricultural and industrial development, but the problem of the excessive cost of moving commodities long distances would remain.

Entities engaging in foreign trade are required to pay an annual registration fee to the government. Commodities are divided into fifteen categories, and a fee covering one year must be paid for the specific category in which the trader wishes to deal. The National Exchange Office of the Ministry of Finance authorizes imports under the import program and payments for invisibles. The office also records exports. Export licenses are granted by the Foreign Trade Department of the Ministry of National Economy.

Foreign trade is conducted under a complex system of payments for imports and surrender of foreign exchange proceeds from exports. Goods included in the import program financed by the United States (import programs financed by the United Kingdom and Australia ceased to exist at the end of 1968) were paid for at the official rate of K240 per US$1. Freight and insurance costs were considered part of the import payment.

Payment for certain specified invisibles also was consummated at the official rate. The categories of invisibles included official transfers covering government expenditures, loan service payments by certain public enterprises, transfers covering allowances for civil servants abroad, allowances for study abroad, and other transfers covering miscellaneous expenses. Suppliers of imports financed by the United States aid programs are paid from the special letter of credit opened by the United States government at the Chase Manhattan Bank of New York in favor of the government of Laos. Other import transactions besides those enumeraterated were being paid in mid-1971 at the official free market rate of about K500 per US$1.

The proceeds from export transactions are subject to a variety of regulations. The official rate of K240 per US$1 applies to 10 percent of the proceeds from exports, with the exception of tin concentrates and export lumber. From 20 to 40 percent of the proceeds of tin concentrates, depending on the grade, is surrendered at the official rate, and 20 percent of the proceeds of export lumber is surrendered at that rate. The official rate also applies to the proceeds of transactions in a wide variety of invisibles, including exchange converted by foreign embassies, missions, representatives, and institutions to cover official expenses in Laos; settlements received by a resident from foreign insurance companies; and the foreign exchange earnings from services and other invisibles by resident companies. Export proceeds must be surrendered to the National - Bank of Laos at the official rate in United States dollars, French francs, or pounds sterling.

In 1962 a trade and payments agreement was concluded with the

Soviet Union. This agreement was used to record expenditures of their respective embassies between 1964 and 1970.

## Composition of Trade

### Exports

The total value of exports almost tripled from 1966 to 1969, rising from K358 million in 1966 to K1,033 million in 1969. Although the overall gain during the period was sizable, the value of exports in 1969 declined substantially from 1968, when the total was K1,448 million (see table 5).

*Table 5. Exports of the Royal Lao Government Area, by Commodity, 1966-69*

(in millions of kip)*

| Commodity | 1966 | 1967 | 1968 | 1969 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tin | 222.4 | 497.6 | 806.1 | 555.1 |
| Timber | 38.1 | 334.7 | 384.3 | 376.5 |
| Coffee (green) | 53.7 | 160.4 | 60.2 | 75.8 |
| Benzoin | 16.9 | 24.4 | 3.8 | 0.2 |
| Cardamom | 15.3 | 10.8 | 51.5 | 4.8 |
| Leather and hides | ... | 3.6 | 5.5 | 8.3 |
| Sticklac | ... | 0.1 | 0.3 | ... |
| Other | 11.3 | 33.1 | 136.4 | 12.2 |
| Total | 357.7 | 1,064.7 | 1,448.1 | 1,032.9 |

....not applicable or quantity unknown.

* 240 kip equal US$1, according to the official rate.

Source: Adapted from *Far Eastern Economic Review Yearbook, 1967*, Hong Kong, 1967, p. 217; and Royal Government of Laos, Ministère du Plan de la Coopération, Service National de la Statistique, *Bulletin de Statistiques du Laos*, Vientiane, June 1970, p. 44.

Exports are based on a very narrow range of products. In 1969 the first three products—tin, lumber, and green coffee—accounted for 97.5 percent of total value; tin and lumber together accounted for 90 percent of the total. Tin remained the most valuable export, accounting for 54 percent of the total; relatively, however, it had declined in importance since 1966, when it provided 62 percent of total value. Exports of lumber products made a spectacular rise from 1966 to 1969, both absolutely and relatively. In 1969 the value of timber exports was K376.5 million, almost ten times the value in 1966, which was K38 million. Relatively, it rose from 10.7 percent of total export value to 36.5 percent.

Opium and gold also enter into foreign trade; however, their export is illegal, and their value is not recorded. Because of heavy bombing in the northern mountains where opium is grown, the domestic crop had declined in importance as an export in 1970, but opium from adjacent countries was channeled through Laos to both nearby and international markets.

Resource studies indicate the possibility of developing a more diverse export base. Under the disturbed circumstances of the 1960s and early 1970s, however, it was not feasible to increase capital and effort significantly to develop more resources with export potential.

### Imports

At the end of 1968 imports were valued at K12,878 million (see table 6). For the first nine months of 1969 they were valued at K13,335 million, and it was estimated that the total for the year would be about K14,150 million. From 1966 to 1968 imports rose in value from K10,017 million to K12,878 million—an increase of about 29 percent.

*Table 6. Imports of the Royal Lao Government Area, by Commodity, 1966-68*

(in millions of kip)*

| Commodity | 1966 | 1967 | 1968 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Agricultural products | 2,793 | 2,789 | 2,430 |
| Food products | 939 | 1,364 | 2,066 |
| Road transportation | 1,315 | 1,543 | 1,762 |
| Mineral products | 1,555 | 2,537 | 1,515 |
| Machinery | 833 | 801 | 1,356 |
| Chemicals and pharmaceuticals | 416 | 406 | 774 |
| Base metals and manufactures | 410 | 486 | 635 |
| Textiles | 512 | 420 | 594 |
| Plastics | 240 | 391 | 409 |
| Paper and paper products | 258 | 315 | 268 |
| Scientific instruments | 115 | 107 | 168 |
| Ceramics | 72 | 99 | 120 |
| Other | 559 | 538 | 781 |
| Total | 10,017 | 11,796 | 12,878 |

* K240 equal US$1, according to the official rate.

Source: Adapted from *Far Eastern Economic Review Yearbook, 1971,* Hong Kong, 1971, p. 217.

Imports, a wide array of commodities, include food and agricultural products, consumer goods, and industrial commodities. In 1968, the last year for which detailed information was available, the most valuable categories were food and agricultural products, transportation equipment, mineral products (mostly petroleum products), and machinery. Food and agricultural products accounted for almost one-third of total value.

Commodities that are produced domestically, such as charcoal, bricks, roof tiles, matches, rubber sandals, coffee, and soft drinks, are on the forbidden list as imports. In the event of shortages of any of these items, licenses to import them may be granted.

Under the import program financed by the United States, rice, specified petroleum products, agricultural and industrial machinery, and trucks and buses may be imported and paid for at the official rate of K240 per US$1. These commodities may not be imported from a number of specified countries, including the major producing countries, so imports are largely limited to those from the United States. Commodities not included in this program may be imported freely, but the trader must supply his own exchange at the official free market rate of K500 to US$1 (in mid-1971).

Gold, which, from the monetary point of view, is the most valuable import, is not included in the total value of imports. It may be purchased, held, and sold in any form within the country, and the duty from gold imports is the most important source of government revenue.

Authorized importers, including banks, place their orders through the Bank of Indochina (Banque de l'Indochine), and the gold is flown in from Western Europe, much of it from Switzerland. The importer in mid-1971 was able to claim the gold at the airport by payment of the current customs duty on the value of the gold calculated at the free market rate of K500 to US$1 and the official gold price of US$35 per ounce. Gold imported is frequently made into heavy jewelry and transported in this, or some other easily concealed, form to neighboring countries, where it is sold at a price high enough to provide a profit on the transaction.

Customs duty on gold imports is one of the most important sources of government revenue. Duty imposed was increased from 7.5 percent of value in 1966 to 8.5 percent in April 1967, a rate that was maintained until January 29, 1969, when it was reduced to 7.5 percent.

### Direction of Trade

The bulk of trade is conducted with nearby Asian countries. In 1968, the latest year for which detailed data on imports by country were available, Thailand, Japan, and the United States were the three leading sources of imports, ranked according to value of commodities provided. These three countries had been the most valuable sources from 1966 to 1968; however, in 1967 Japan rose from third to second in rank, a place it still held in 1968 (see table 7).

Thailand, which accounted for 26 percent of total import value, was a major supplier of foodstuffs. Japan supplied textiles, clothing, and other consumer goods; and the United States supplied

*Table 7. Imports of the Royal Lao Government Area, by Country of Origin, 1966-68*

(in millions of kip)*

| Country | 1966 | 1967 | 1968 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Thailand | 3,388.2 | 3,318.9 | 3,349.7 |
| Japan | 1,276.8 | 1,891.8 | 2,750.2 |
| United States | 1,392.5 | 1,761.8 | 1,763.5 |
| Indonesia | 507.3 | 1,132.4 | 444.4 |
| France | 475.6 | 631.2 | 970.3 |
| Singapore | 146.7 | 540.8 | 462.8 |
| United Kingdom | 806.6 | 535.5 | 913.4 |
| Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) | 305.9 | 337.7 | 328.7 |
| Other | 1,717.5 | 1,646.2 | 1,895.6 |
| Total | 10,017.1 | 11,796.3 | 12,878.6 |

* 240 kip equal US$1, according to the official rate.

Source: Adapted from *Far Eastern Economic Review Yearbook, 1971,* Hong Kong, 1971, p. 217.

motor vehicles, industrial machinery, construction and mining equipment, and petroleum products. France and the United Kingdom ranked fourth and fifth, respectively, as supplying countries; their contribution, however, was well below that of the top ranking sources.

Singapore and Thailand were the destination of more than 90 percent of exports by value in 1969 (see table 8). Tin for smelting was the major commodity sent to Singapore, and Thailand was an important market for wood products. A large proportion of the commodities sent to Thailand are reexported from Bangkok, which is the principal shipping port for Laos. The ultimate destination is not readily available because reexports are not always listed separately according to source.

## INTERNATIONAL FINANCE OF THE ROYAL LAO GOVERNMENT AREA

### Balance of Payments

The consistent excess of payments over receipts for goods and services has resulted in a longtime unfavorable position in international transactions for that part of Laos controlled by the Royal Lao Government. Because of the extent of the unrecorded transactions in goods and services, exact information concerning the position is difficult to obtain and, to a certain extent, must be based on estimates.

*Table 8. Exports of the Royal Lao Government Area, by Country of Destination, 1966-69*

(in millions of kip) *

| Country | 1966 | 1967 | 1968 | 1969 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Singapore and Malaysia | 277.6 | 650.1 | 913.7 | 556.5 |
| Thailand | 58.7 | 363.5 | 409.8 | 386.6 |
| United States | 1.7 | 20.3 | 12.5 | 0.5 |
| Hong Kong | 10.0 | 17.8 | 111.0 | 11.9 |
| France | 9.2 | 11.8 | 0.2 | 0.6 |
| Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam) | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.4 | 76.5 |
| United Kingdom | .... | .... | 0.2 | .... |
| Other | 0.2 | 0.9 | 0.3 | 0.3 |
| Total | 357.7 | 1,064.7 | 1,448.1 | 1,032.9 |

....Not applicable or quantity unknown.

* 240 kip equal US$1, according to the official rate.

Source: Adapted from *Far Eastern Economic Review Yearbook, 1971,* Hong Kong, 1971, p. 217; and Royal Government of Laos, Ministère du Plan et de la Coopération, Service National de la Statistique, *Bulletin de Statistiques du Laos,* Vientiane, June 1970, p. 45.

Based on the intricate system of foreign exchange payments for imports and surrender of exchange for exports, receipts for exports in 1967, including an estimate of the unrecorded sale of opium, totaled the equivalent of US$17.6 million. In the same year payments for goods and services, including gold imports that are excluded from official calculations of import value, were about US$94.1 million, leaving a deficit on current account of about US$76.5 million. The deficit was paid by aid from foreign countries and by contributions from the Foreign Exchange Operations Fund for Laos that had been maintained by a consortium of industrialized countries since 1964 (see ch. 11, Character and Structure of the Economy). Estimates indicated that the deficit would be larger in 1968 because of the decrease in duties from gold imports and the increase in nongold imports, payments for services, and transfer payments. Details on the various transaction categories were not available at the end of 1970.

## Foreign Economic Aid

Foreign economic aid has been a major source of strength in achieving monetary stability and in development programs for the Royal Lao Government area. In addition to the aid provided by contributions from the Foreign Exchange Operations Fund for the purpose of restraining inflationary trends, aid has been given for providing essential imports and for implementing special projects. Aid given to provide essential imports declined from the equivalent of US$81 million in 1966 to about US$2.5 million in 1969, when the United States was the only country that continued to finance a commodity import program.

Project aid, which also included annual military assistance under the French military mission program, averaged about US$50.6 million from 1966 to 1968. In 1969 it dropped to about US$38.3 million, largely in protest to an increase in deficit spending by the government.

Major donors are Australia, France, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany), Thailand, Canada, India, and the United Nations have been project aid donors also; New Zealand, Israel, the Republic of China (Nationalist China), the Philippines, Indonesia, Denmark, and Belgium have participated in programs for social and economic development. There were indications that significant, but unrecorded, amounts of additional aid were made by some countries.

Project assistance from the United States, which has been the major donor since the mid-1950s, has been used to provide supplies and advisory services to implement programs in the fields of agriculture, irrigation, small industries, roads and other public works, education, community development, refugee relief and resettlement, air transport, and health and sanitation. For the most part, these projects have been initiated by the United States Agency for International Development (AID) and have also required financial allowances for general technical support. The United States has also contributed to the implementation of regional programs that benefit other countries as well as Laos, such as the Nam Ngum River Dam project.

In point of total aid, France and the United Kingdom ranked next to the United States as contributors from 1966 to 1969. Both countries contributed to the Foreign Exchange Operations Fund and to project aid annually, and the United Kingdom contributed to the Commodity Import Program from 1966 to 1968. France maintained a military mission; a cultural mission, including more than 300 professors and teachers; and an economic and technical mission, with a staff of eighty-two technicians in diverse fields. Among the projects to which France contributed were the Selebam Dam, the power transmission line to Pakse, and the installation at the Nam Dong Dam to provide power for Luang Prabang. France also provided funds for feasibility studies.

Assistance from the United Kingdom was largely concentrated in the fields of communications and public health. Technical programming assistance and financial aid were provided for the Lao National Radio network and a nationwide network with broadcasting and relay stations at Vientiane, Luang Prabang, and Pakse (see ch. 7, Language, Communication and the Arts). The United Kingdom also provided equipment for a new hospital built at Khammouane and medical teams for public health work.

Japanese project aid, which began in 1958, has covered diverse fields. The first projects included the construction of a powerplant with three thermal generators and a filtration plant and water distribution system for Vientiane. These projects were completed by 1964. Since then, Japan has provided technical and financial aid for the Nam Ngum River Dam and has undertaken the extension of the runway for international jet aircraft at Vientiane's Wattay Airport. Among other projects that Japan has undertaken or participated in are mineral surveys, the managing and financing of a demonstration farm, and the construction of a primary school and dispensary. Since 1865 youth volunteers have also provided technical instruction to young Laotians in a wide variety of government departments, including education, public works, agriculture, and social welfare.

Among other donors of economic assistance are West Germany, Australia, Israel, and the United Nations specialized agencies. West Germany made available assistance in the fields of electric power, water supply, and communications. It also made contributions in the fields of technical education and school construction.

Australian assistance, which was channeled through the activities of the Colombo Plan (see Glossary), consisted of financial aid, materials and equipment, and technical personnel for a wide range of projects, including agricultural, educational, and communications programs. Australia also provided mining equipment for industry. Israel has been active in the management of a demonstration farm and the training of Laotian personnel to carry on the program.

The United Nations provides assistance through regional organizations, such as the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE), and through the programs of specialized agencies, such as the World Health Organization, the Bureau of Technical Assistance Organization, and others. In 1969 assistance programs were being coordinated to make the most effective use of resources.

## DOMESTIC TRADING CONDITIONS IN THE ROYAL LAO GOVERNMENT AREA

Domestic trade in the Royal Lao Government area is disparate in character, ranging from a simple exchange of basic commodities within a limited area to a more sophisticated marketing system, effecting the exchange of goods and services through the monetary sector. The free flow of goods is inhibited by the character of the terrain, the lack of an adequate transportation system, and the cultural habits that persist in certain areas. At the beginning of the 1970s insurgency and external wars also were impediments to the orderly conduct of domestic trade.

### Rural Trade

In rural areas farmers supply most of their own needs and provide those basic commodities not produced personally through barter or with a minimal use of money. The production of goods and services for exchange is not a full-time occupation but is pursued in the spare time of the farmer or members of his family. It is a function of the resources of the region and the skills of various groups.

Market bazaars are held in villages, especially in lowland areas, on a designated day, usually once a week. Regional specialties, such as forest products from mountain areas, are brought to market to be exchanged for surplus agricultural products. Basic imported consumer goods enter rural trade through these small area markets. Full-time traders, in either rural or urban areas, are usually foreigners, such as Vietnamese or Chinese. Markets are largely staffed by women, although men also attend, as they often travel long distances bringing heavy loads to market.

That part of Laos under the control of the Royal Lao Government suffers from the lack of a well-organized system for marketing surplus agricultural products and a means whereby farmers can obtain basic production needs and consumer goods. The organization of improved marketing facilities is a major objective of the Agricultural Development Organization and the Royal Lao Government.

### Urban Trade

Urban trade is more highly organized than rural trade and is conducted within the money economy, although buying and selling still employ bargaining rather than fixed prices. Merchandise offered for sale consists of imported goods, simple consumer needs produced domestically, and foodstuffs brought into the towns from nearby villages or the surrounding countryside. Retail outlets range from outdoor markets to small stores carrying similar stocks of goods.

Food for the cities is brought in from the surrounding area, usually by water, and sold in open-air markets. Vientiane, Luang Prabang, Savannakhet, Pakse, and Khammouane are major markets for produce of the areas, particularly rice.

Almost all commodities sold in urban retail stores are imported and are of household needs, such as cloth, thread, needles, cooking utensils, salt, and furniture. In Vientiane, and to a lesser degree in Svannakhet and Pakse, however, consumers also can purchase more sophisticated commodities, such as tape recorders, cameras, radios, electrical appliances, imported clothing and food, and motorcycles. Registration of motor vehicles indicate an increased availability of transportation equipment.

## Transportation

Lack of adequate transportation facilities, either natural or manmade, is a major obstacle to the development of that part of the country under the control of the Royal Lao Government. It inhibits the free flow of goods and people and has been an economically, culturally, and politically divisive factor.

Laos has no railroads. Goods and people move by water, highway, and air. Numerous bridges and sections of roads in the Royal Lao Government area have been attacked and destroyed by hostile armed forces.

### Water Transportation

The Mekong River, with its tributaries, is the major waterway. Because of falls and rapids, however, it is not easily navigable throughout its entire length. The river is navigable between Luang Prabang, Vientiane, and Savannakhet. Between Savannakhet and Pakse the Khemmarat Rapids are an impediment to navigation. Several tributaries also can be used for travel and freight.

Large barges are used only on the Mekong River; launches traverse both the Mekong and its larger tributaries. Chinese-owned pirogues carrying passengers and cargo ply the rivers during the rainy season. The large boats on the Mekong, owned and managed by a government agency, are inadequate to fill the demand.

### Highways

The major highways in the Royal Lao Government area is National Road 13, which is the main north-south road and largely parallels the Mekong River, linking Luang Prabang, Vientiane, Khammouane, Savannakhet, and Pakse. It ends at the Cambodian border. This highway artery is supplemented by shorter ones trending in a generally northerly direction and by a few east-west roads, several of which traverse the mountains.

In 1971 the roads leading east through the central part of the country to North Vietnam were closed to traffic from the Royal Lao Government area.

In 1969 there was a total of about 3,890 miles of roads of all surfaces in the Royal Lao Government area. Of the total, about 815 miles were all-weather roads. Some 510 miles were surfaced with asphalt, and only twelve miles, between Vientiane and Thailand, were paved.

The highway system in the royal government territory had suffered from attacks of insurgents and from bombing raids. In 1969 several attacks were launched on National Road 13, and it was estimated that at least a dozen bridges were destroyed, leaving cities in the Mekong River valley isolated. Although efforts were made to repair damaged roads and keep them open, security conditions in 1970 and 1971 continued to make land travel hazardous.

The use of motor vehicles rose sharply from 1945, when nineteen vehicles (eighteen passenger cars and one truck) were registered, to 1969, when a total of 14,342 vehicles—excluding government, military, and diplomatic cars—were registered. Of the total, 11,430 were passenger cars, and 2,912 were buses, trucks, or tractors. There were also 11,204 motorcycles registered and in use. Growth of motor transportation was rapid between 1951 and 1958 and from 1965 to 1967. The growth in the use of motorcycles as a means of transportation was outstanding. The number in use in 1969 was more than seven times the number in 1963, which was 1,510.

### Air Transportation

The Royal Lao Government area of Laos has both international and domestic air service. Because of the lack of security of highway travel and of the inadequacies of water transportation, air facilities are of great importance domestically, and flying is a common means of transportation for passengers and for high-value cargo.

There were more than twenty airfields capable of accommodating DC-3s. Among the major ones serving internal traffic were those at Luang Prabang, Vientiane, Khammouane Savannakhet, Pakse, and Saravane. Wattay Airport at Vientiane, was the international airport. It had been expanded to serve jet planes that did not require long runways, and in July 1970 a runway of about 3,700 yards was completed with Japanese aid.

Royal Air Lao and Lao Airlines served international traffic, making flights to Saigon, Phnom Penh, Bangkok, and Hong Kong. Air Vietnam, Royal Air Cambodge, and Thai Airways made flights into Vientiane. There were a number of small airlines making internal flights, and Air America carried passengers (including refugees), food, and other supplies from one small mountain field to another.

In 1969 at Wattay Airport there were 1,016 incoming international flights carrying 19,886 passengers and 725 tons of freight, in contrast to 1,064 flights carrying 18,669 passengers and 482 tons of freight in 1967. At the same time there were 1,023 outgoing flights carrying 22,909 passengers and 666 tons of freight, in contrast to 1,081 departures carrying 18,839 passengers and 618 tons of freight in 1967. There was a noteworthy increase of incoming cargo evidenced during the period.

Internal activity at Wattay Airport also registered an increase from 1967 to 1969. The number of incoming flights increased from 2,415 in 1967 to 3,500 in 1969, and passengers increased from slightly more than 32,000 to 38,000; incoming cargo, however, dropped from 924 tons to 812 tons. The number of outgoing flights increased from 2,424 to 3,556, and passengers and freight carried to provincial cities rose significantly; the number of passengers increased from about 35,000 to 52,000, and cargo carried more than doubled, rising from 1,865 tons in 1967 to 4,428 tons in 1969. Activity at all provincial airports increased during the period, but the rise in incoming and outgoing freight at Pakse and Savannakhet was outstanding.

## Communications

In 1969 there were 1,444 telephone lines in the Royal Lao Government area, an increase from 1,076 in 1968. Until 1967 there was no long-distance telephone service, and foreign communications and domestic communications between cities were achieved by radio. Vientiane has had a dial telphone system since 1963, but the provincial cities, such as Khammouane, Savannakhet, and Pakse, used manually operated switchboards.

In 1967 a direct line was established between Vientiane and Bangkok, and it was also possible to make domestic long-distance calls from Vientiane to Luang Prabang or Savannkhet. In 1968 telephone communication was established with most of the rest of the world, and in 1969 there were slightly more than 15,000 incoming international calls, and about 4,500 outgoing calls.

The government owns the telephone and postal systems and operates them through the Post and Telecommunications Service. The extension of the telephone system and the extension of the postal system were goals of the Social and Economic Development Plan for 1969 to 1974.

## FOREIGN COMMODITY SUPPORT FOR THE LAO PATRIOTIC FRONT AREA

In 1971 evaluation of the extent of foreign commodity support for the Lao Patriotic Front (Neo Lao Hak Sat—NLHS) area was impossible to separate from consideration of the military and political relationships between the NLHS and the North Vietnamese (see ch. 9, Political Dynamics; ch. 14, National Defense and Internal Security). The NLHS zone, because of the primitive state of its economy, was heavily dependent upon North Vietnam for supplies not locally produced (see ch. 11, Character and Structure of the Economy). In the late 1960s the NLHS administration reportedly was relying greatly upon the North Vietnamese to manage the procurement, maintenance, and transportation of civilian and military equipment and supplies, facilities, and personnel.

Both NLHS and North Vietnamese authorities in each of the provinces under NLHS control at that time were required annually to submit a list of supply needs to the appropriate administrative center, from which the lists were forwarded to the North Vietnamese government in Hanoi. The government of North Vietnam reportedly then transmitted an overall request to the government of the People's Republic of China (PRC). After PRC authorities had determined the kinds and quantities of supplies they were willing to provide, they informed the North Vietnamese government, which in turn notified NLHS and North Vietnamese authorities in the NLHS zone.

For northwestern areas under NLHS control, representatives of the NLHS and North Vietnam went to K'un-ming in Yunnan Province, in the PRC, to receive the supplies and establish a schedule for transporting them to the NLHS zone. The North Vietnamese portion was picked up at the PRC-Laos border near Muong Sing and transported to depots in the town of Muong Luong Nam Tha, from which further distribution was made to North Vietnamese army units. These supplies included arms and ammunition, basic staples (such as canned meat and fish, fish sauce, sugar, milk, cigarettes, soap, and toothpaste), as well as rainproof clothing, kitchenware, sandals and shoes, blankets, and mosquito nets.

NLHS agents also received their goods at the PRC frontier and stored them in warehouses on the NLHS side of the border from where civilians later transported the goods to other points. In addition to the kinds of items furnished to the North Vietnamese army, the NLHS also reportedly received groceries, agricultural tools, cloth, and other merchandise, to be sold by NLHS authorities to the civilian population (see ch. 5, Health, Education, and Welfare). Proceeds from these sales were reportedly used to defray

NLHS administrative expenses. No information on the details of procurement and supply movements for either the NLHS or the North Vietnamese forces in northeastern and eastern Laos were available.

# SECTION IV. NATIONAL SECURITY

## CHAPTER 14

## NATIONAL DEFENSE AND INTERNAL SECURITY

The sporadic, essentially seasonal fighting in Laos began in 1963—less than a year after the 1962 Geneva agreements. Until late 1968 hostilities consisted almost entirely of small-scale actions in sparsely populated areas; they intensified into nearly continuous warfare in 1969. By mid-1971 the armed forces of the Royal Lao Government had incurred considerable losses (see ch. 3, Historical Setting). These losses were, however, more in irregular forces directly supported by the United States than in the regular forces. The irregulars, whose combat unit strength was about equal to that of the regulars, bore the brunt of the fighting, whereas the regulars were largely deployed on static duty. All royal government forces in 1971, regular and irregular combined, were estimated to total about 90,000 men.

Opposing the government forces were the ground troops of the Lao People's Liberation Army of about 39,000 men, located mostly in northern Laos, and a North Vietnamese force varying with the requirements of military operations. In early 1971 this force was estimated at about 100,000. The North Vietnamese were primarily concerned with operating the Ho Chi Minh Trail complex in the Laotian panhandle and with providing military assistance to the Lao Patriotic Front (Neo Lao Hak Sat—NLHS, see Glossary). In tactical operations the North Vietnamese usually were in the forefront of attacks on government positions and bore most of the casualties.

Troops of the People's Republic of China (PRC) were also present in Laos in 1971. They were estimated to number between 14,000 and 20,000 and for the most part were construction workers engaged in roadbuilding in northern Laos (see ch. 10, Foreign Relations). They were known to have antiaircraft artillery installations; however, there was no evidence that PRC troops were engaged in any ground actions.

By early 1971 the Laotian manpower reserve had been exhausted by the demands of both the progovernment and antigovernment military forces. The government irregulars, originally primarily Meo, had in particular suffered serious losses from battle casualties. To provide needed manpower, irregulars were recruited in Thailand (paid for by the United States) and assigned to the irregular commands. The liberation army troop strength appeared to remain fairly constant, however; this was attributed by some observers to the effectiveness of conscription for the army and to the tactics in which it was employed.

United States military assistance to the royal government continued in 1971; the cost to the United States of nine years of the military assistance program—from 1962 through 1970—was estimated to be about US$500 million, not including the cost of equipping and training irregular and paramilitary forces.

The United States Air Force and the United States Navy played a combat role in the war in Laos in 1971 through the utilization of aircraft in both strategic and tactical bombing operations. The sortie rate, however, was reported in early 1971 to be lower than that of the preceeding two years.

The movement of large numbers of refugees to camps and more permanent settlements and of migrants to cities had not caused serious internal security problems for the government by mid-1971, although the government declared a state of emergency in February 1971 because of what it called the "difficult situation." The Lao National Police, numbering somewhat more than 5,000 men, collaborated with the armed forces in maintaining security in royal government-held areas.

From sketchy accounts of security conditions in NLHS-held territory, it appeared that the pervasive administrative controls exercised by the NLHS were relatively effective and that military conscription, tax collection, and work assignments were generally being carried out successfully. Tens of thousands of persons, nonetheless, had fled NLHS areas to areas under royal government control (see ch. 4, Social Systems; ch. 5, Health, Education, and Welfare).

## ARMED FORCES OF THE ROYAL LAO GOVERNMENT

### Background

The armed forces of the Kingdom of Laos were established on the basis of the Franco-Laotian convention of 1949 by which Laos became an independent state within the French Union. Individual Laotians served in the ranks of the predominantly Vietnamese colonial forces maintained by the French. The Laotian independence movement after World War II had a small armed force, but by 1949 the movement had split into factions, and this force of 1,500 Vietnamese and Laotians had been defeated and scattered by the Franco-Laotian units that had restored French control (see ch. 3, Historical Setting).

The Lao National Army, formed in 1949, was a constabulary force of 1,200 men, whose commissioned and noncommissioned officers were almost exclusively French. It was a part of the French Union forces under the operational control of the French commander in chief in Indochina.

The Laotian forces were augmented in 1950 to replace French forces moved from Laos to Vietnam to meet increasingly serious Viet Minh (see Glossary) attacks there. Financing for the increase was provided by allocation of funds by the High Commissariat of the Associated States of Indochina. By the end of 1950 there were 3,000 men in the Laotian territorial military establishment. Further increases took place, and by late 1952 the total had risen to 12,000 men. Its officers, however, were still mainly French. At the height of the fighting between the French and the Viet Minh in early 1954, the French had trained and equipped a Laotian army of 15,000 men. Laotian units were used by the French in conjunction with their own small forces remaining in Laos in defensive actions against Viet Minh incursions into Loas, which took place before the decisive battle of Dien Bien Phu in 1954, close to the northeastern border of Laos.

The ranks of the new army were formed around former members of the French colonial forces, for the most part ethnic Lao. Military organization and attitudes in the new units continued to be under French influence, reinforced by French training of both officers and men in military doctrine and tactical concepts. Conditions of military service were attractive to some Laotians, to judge from the remark attributed to General Kong Le (who joined the army at the age of seventeen at the end of 1951) that "the pay was so high that even a Private could think of getting married." There was, however, little military tradition in any of the Laotian states united in the kingdom, and the military glories of the Lao kingdom of Lan Xang appeared to have left slight traces in modern Laos (see ch. 3, Historical Setting).

### Mission

The military forces of the Royal Lao Government were known in 1971 as the Royal Armed Forces (Forces Armées Royales—FAR). In strict legal interpretation the FAR included the armed forces of all factions in the Provisional Government of National Union, including those of the NLHS, but the term is used here only for those forces under royal government control (see ch. 8, Political System and Values). The mission of the FAR was the preservation of the kingdom's national integrity, which had been under almost constant threat from domestic dissidents since it became independent and which in 1971 was being seriously threatened by the North Vietnamese. Hostile military pressures required it to maintain a continuous state of readiness for national defense. From time to time an obstacle to the accomplishment of the basic mission has been the employment of the royal government's military resources in domestic political activities, as FAR leaders, generally members of the small number of Lao elite families, took part in the coups and countercoups that often reflected the regional and family loyalties that are dominant in the allegiance of many Laotians (see ch. 4, Social Systems; ch. 9, Political Dynamics).

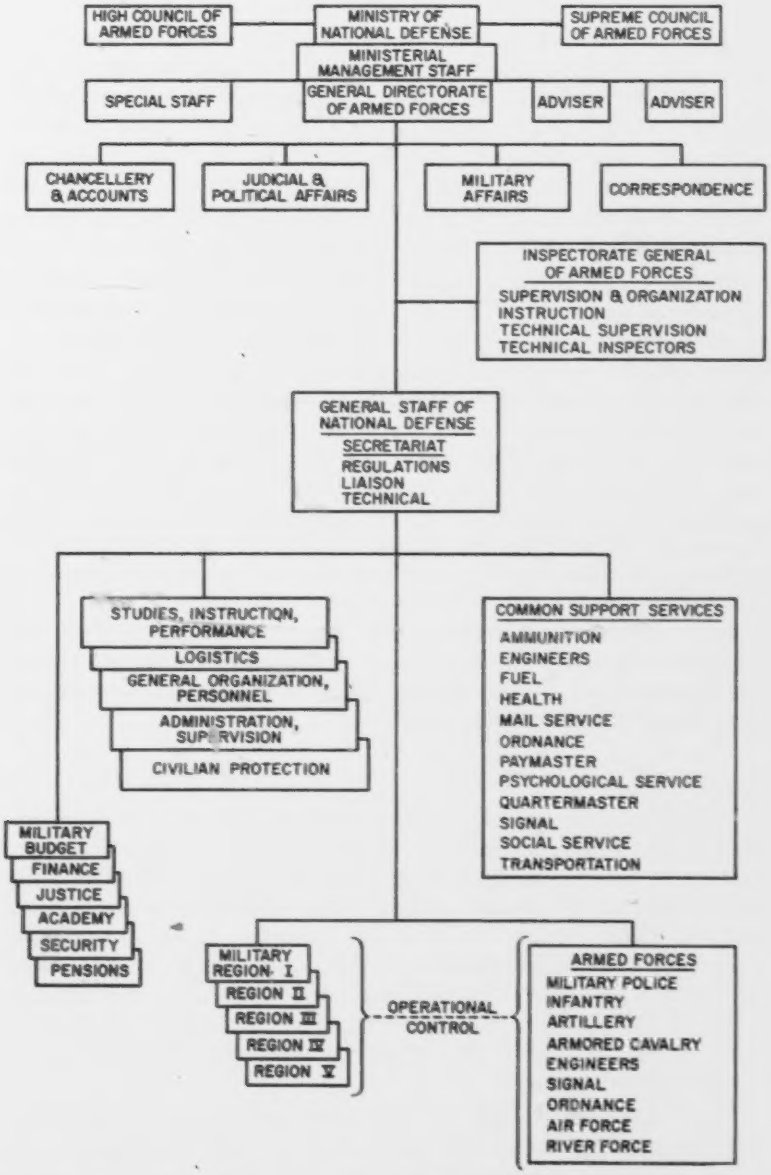
The FAR was predominantly a ground force but included within its overall command structure both an air arm and a river force; the army also had primary responsibility for internal security as well as territorial defense; the air force was charged with providing air support for the ground forces; and the river flotilla had the mission of patrolling the Mekong River and tributaries and of transporting military personnel and supplies.

### Organization and Strength

The Constitution of 1947 states that the king shall be the supreme head of the armed forces and that the king shall establish civil and military posts and make appointments to them in accordance with law. These powers, like all others granted him, are to be exercised through the intermediary of his ministers (see ch. 8, Political System and Values).

In 1971 military affairs were under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of National Defense, which was established in 1964 in a reorganization that abolished its predecessor, the Ministry of National Security, and transferred the earlier ministry's jurisdiction over the police to the Ministry of Interior; the reorganization was completed in 1965. Prime Minister Prince Souvanna Phouma held the portfolio of national defense in mid-1971, as he had since June 1960 and during most of the period from 1954 to 1958. In mid-1971 Sisouk na Champassak was the prime minister's delegate at the Ministry of National Defense, in charge of day-to-day administration of the ministry.

The minister of national defense was advised by two consultative councils for the armed forces. The General Staff of National Defense was subordinate to the minister, and the chain of command ran from the general staff to the tactical commands in the five military regions into which the country was divided in 1971 and to the commands of the air force and river force. Each military region commander, an army general officer, was charged with operational and administrative control of all army troops and establishments in his region. A deputy commanded the irregular forces assigned to each region. The general staff had the usual administrative organizational units dealing with personnel, inspection, and security. There was a single organization under it dealing with services of common support, such as logistics (for example, quartermaster), and with psychological activities (see fig. 9).


HIGH COUNCIL OF ARMED FORCES
MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE
SUPREME COUNCIL OF ARMED FORCES
MINISTERIAL MANAGEMENT STAFF
SPECIAL STAFF
GENERAL DIRECTORATE OF ARMED FORCES
ADVISER
ADVISER
CHANCELLERY & ACCOUNTS
JUDICIAL & POLITICAL AFFAIRS
MILITARY AFFAIRS
CORRESPONDENCE
INSPECTORATE GENERAL OF ARMED FORCES
SUPERVISION & ORGANIZATION
INSTRUCTION
TECHNICAL SUPERVISION
TECHNICAL INSPECTORS
GENERAL STAFF OF NATIONAL DEFENSE
SECRETARIAT
REGULATIONS
LIAISON
TECHNICAL
STUDIES, INSTRUCTION, PERFORMANCE
LOGISTICS
GENERAL ORGANIZATION, PERSONNEL
ADMINISTRATION, SUPERVISION
CIVILIAN PROTECTION
COMMON SUPPORT SERVICES
AMMUNITION
ENGINEERS
FUEL
HEALTH
MAIL SERVICE
ORDNANCE
PAYMASTER
PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICE
QUARTERMASTER
SIGNAL
SOCIAL SERVICE
TRANSPORTATION
MILITARY BUDGET
FINANCE
JUSTICE
ACADEMY
SECURITY
PENSIONS
MILITARY REGION I
REGION II
REGION III
REGION IV
REGION V
OPERATIONAL CONTROL
ARMED FORCES
MILITARY POLICE
INFANTRY
ARTILLERY
ARMORED CAVALRY
ENGINEERS
SIGNAL
ORDNANCE
AIR FORCE
RIVER FORCE

Source: Adapted from Dominique Guerrini, *Organigrammes—organisation politique et administrative du Laos*, Vientiane, 1967.

*Figure 9. Organization of the Ministry of National Defense of the Royal Lao Government, 1969*

The royal government did not publish official data on the strength of the FAR in 1971. Various estimates of the overall force and its components, however, placed its total manpower, including paramilitary and irregular forces associated with it, between 95,000 and 98,000 men. Most were in ground forces, which totaled 83,000 to 89,000 men, composed of about 53,000 in the royal army and 30,000 to 36,000 men in paramilitary and irregular unit ground forces. Additionally, there were 2,000 to 4,000 men in the Royal Lao Air Force and approximately 400 men in the river force.

The government's budget for the fiscal year that ended June 30, 1971, listed expenditures for defense at about K8.9 billion (240 kip equal US$1—see Glossary). In addition, about K1.9 billion was allocated for the national police and internal security. Total anticipated revenues from all domestic sources were K9.5 billion. The cost of national defense and internal security was, therefore, more than the amount realized from the government's own financial resources. The deficit, as for all other expenditures by the government, was made up by foreign grants amounting to the equivalent of K8.8 billion. Almost the entire sum budgeted for defense was allocated to pay and allowances for the regular armed forces and for the administrative and overhead expenses of the Ministry of National Defense. The cost of training, arming, and supplying the Laotian forces came from outside sources, almost entirely from the United States, which also supplied the pay and allowances of the irregular forces.

### Royal Lao Army

The combat element of the Royal Lao Army was organized into fifty-eight infantry battalions and one artillery regiment of four battalions. Infantry equipment and artillery pieces, including guns and howitzers of various caliber, were supplied by the United States. There were, in addition, military police, armored, engineer, and communications units. The armored units were equipped with United States light tanks and Soviet amphibious armored gun carriers (some of which were captured on the Plain of Jars during the FAR's 1969 offensive), armored cars, scout cars, and personnel carriers.

The largest tactical unit of the royal army was the battalion, which was composed of a headquarters, a headquarters company, and three rifle companies. Rifle companies were usually organized into a headquarters, a heavy weapons platoon, and three to five rifle platoons. The organization of paratroop battalions was reported to be similar to that of the infantry units. The artillery and armored forces operated in battalion-sized units known as groups—sometimes, according to reports, as independent units under the control of the commander of the military region in which they were located. Armor and artillery were both limited in their operations by the availability and condition of roads, which were few and poor in the dry season and often impassable in the rainy season.

There was no detailed information on deployment of the army forces in 1971. It was reported, however, that the Royal Lao Army forces were devoted primarily to static defense, concentrated near centers of population, lines of communication, depots, and airfields. According to this report, 3,000 men, or over 5 percent of the army's strength, were assigned to guard duty. No information was made public on the FAR's policy or practice of assignment or rotation of combat units to the various kinds of duty.

### Royal Lao Air Force

The Royal Lao Air Force in 1971 was equipped with about seventy-five T-28 light-strike or training aircraft, about twenty C-47s in both transport and gunship configurations, fewer than ten H-34 helicopters, and some small U-1 and U-17 aircraft. There was no information on deployment; however, one report stated that T-28 aircraft reserved for training were kept at Udorn in Thailand, as were aircraft being repaired.

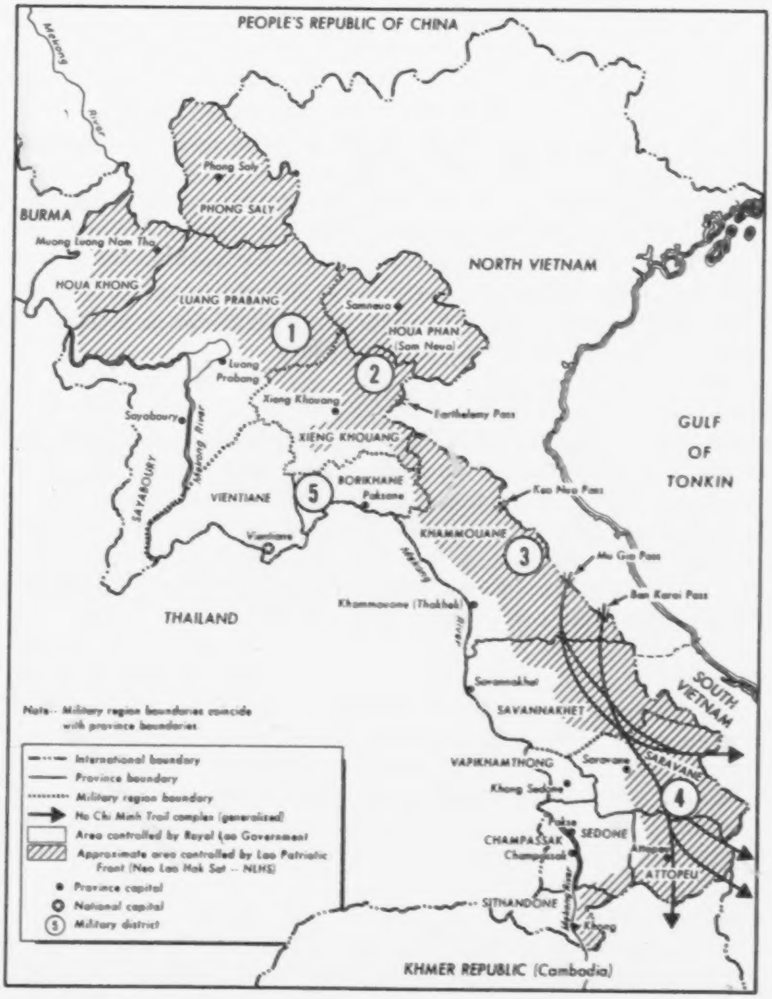
### River Force

The 400 men of the royal government river force manned four river squadrons, reportedly consisting of thirty-six patrol craft and lighters and ten landing craft, all of shallow draft and less than 100 tons. In 1971 these vessels were described as mostly not operational. There were no details on the operations of this flotilla on the Mekong River and its major tributaries.

### Irregular Forces

The irregular forces were a major element of the royal goverment's military establishment in 1971. The principal irregular forces, or special guerrilla units, were generally known as the Secret Army (Armée Clandestine). The French term for these units was *bataillons guerriers*. The units originally began as a force of Meo tribesmen under Vang Pao, a Meo (in 1971 a major general of the FAR and commander of Military Region II, formerly the principal area of Meo habitation) (see ch. 4, Social Systems). The irregular forces were equipped, trained, and advised by the United States personnel, at the request of the royal government.

Units of irregulars were found in each of the military regions except in the area immediately around Vientiane. About 38 percent of the total irregular forces was said to be in Military Region II (see fig. 10).


PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA
Mekong River
Phong Saly
PHONG SALY
BURMA
Muong Luong Nam Tha
HOUA KHONG
LUANG PRABANG
NORTH VIETNAM
Samneua
HOUA PHAN (Sam Neua)
1
2
Luang Prabang
Xieng Khouang
Barthelemy Pass
Sayaboury
SAYABOURY
Mekong River
XIENG KHOUANG
GULF OF TONKIN
VIENTIANE
5
BORIKHANE
Paksane
Keo Nua Pass
Vientiane
KHAMMOUANE
3
Mu Gia Pass
Ban Karai Pass
THAILAND
Khammouane (Thakhek)
Mekong River
Savannakhet
SOUTH VIETNAM
SAVANNAKHET
SARAVANE
VAPIKHAMTHONG
Saravane
Khong Sedone
4
Pakse
SEDONE
CHAMPASSAK
Champassak
Attopeu
ATTOPEU
SITHANDONE
Mekong River
Khong
KHMER REPUBLIC (Cambodia)
Note-- Military region boundaries coincide with province boundaries
International boundary
Province boundary
Military region boundary
Ho Chi Minh Trail complex (generalized)
Area controlled by Royal Lao Government
Approximate area controlled by Lao Patriotic Front (Neo Lao Hak Sat -- NLHS)
Province capital
National capital
Military district

Source: Adapted from US Congress, 91st, 2d Session, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on United States Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad, *United States Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad*, I (Pts. 1-4, Hearings), Washington, 1971, p. 471.

*Figure 10. Military Regions of Laos, June 1971.*

### Militia and National Guard

The Royal Lao Government militia units reportedly comprised regional forces of guerrillas intended to support the FAR. There was no information available on their organization, strength, or location in 1971. The royal government's National Guard was reported to be inactive in 1971.

## Sources of Manpower and Conditions of Service

### Manpower

It was estimated in 1970 that the combined military manpower of all the forces in Laos took 10 percent of the labor force, which was about 1,335,000 males and females aged ten or above (see ch. 12, Economic Resources). The regular component of the FAR accounted for about 3 percent. Overall, military service was a heavy burden on the Laotian economy, which was largely agricultural, underdeveloped, and dependent on its labor force. According to an American analyst, the large numbers of young men in the armed forces had caused a labor shortage by early 1970, and by 1971 the manpower base for further conscription had been exhausted. Because of the shortage of men, the royal government requested permission from the Thai government to recruit in Thailand a force of Thai irregulars, who were brought to Laos and placed under Laotian command.

For manpower the various forces—the regular and irregular branches of the FAR, the Communists, and the neutralists—drew to some extent on different sectors of the population. The FAR was for the most part ethnic Lao, whereas the irregulars were predominantly Meo or Lao Theung (see Glossary). The ethnic composition of the indigenous communist forces was not known; however, the areas from which the Communists conscripted or recruited soldiers were predominantly tribal Tai and Lao Theung. No information was available on the composition of the neutralist forces (see ch. 2, Physical Environment and Population; ch. 4, Social Systems).

The manpower situation of the irregular forces had deteriorated seriously by 1971 because of battle casualties and as the result of the displacement of the Meo by hostilities in Military Region II. The irregular forces and their predecessors were said to have had more than 8,000 men killed in action from 1968 through the first four months of 1971; of this number, nearly 6,900 were lost in military regions I and II. In addition, Major General Vang Pao's forces were reported to have had more than 5,400 men wounded in action since 1967. Another estimate reported that the Meo lost 10,000 killed in action in a ten-year period ending in 1971, with the annual rate of battle deaths rising to 2,000 in the 1968-71 period. As a result of Meo losses, the irregular forces in 1971 were no longer mostly Meo but included about 40 percent Lao Theung. Another consequence of this manpower shortage was the reported assignment to Military

Region II, by 1971, of three battalions of the FAR and of several battalions composed of Thai.

### Recruitment

The royal government in the 1950s established and organized through laws and royal ordinances a system of compulsory military service, under which all able-bodied males between the ages of nineteen and forty-five were legally required to serve in the FAR for one year. The royal government, however, appears to have found it increasingly difficult to enforce the regular conscription laws, and by 1971 a national conscription system was not functioning; the laws had apparently fallen into disuse or were largely ignored. Instead, the government was reported to be resorting from time to time to the forcible drafting of young men because of the deterioration of military security in the kingdom. It was reported that the government had established requirements for each military region, which in turn set up quotas for provinces and districts, but in contested areas military commanders impressed whomever they could in order to meet their manpower needs.

Voluntary enlistment in the FAR is for a period of two years. In 1971 such enlistments were reported to be very few. The desertion rate of new recruits was said to be 30 percent.

The shrinking manpower base available to the royal government has caused a general lowering of the minimum age requirement for military service in the FAR. There appeared to be no standard practice in government recruiting, which varied by military regions. Some accounts stated that the minimum age in the FAR was twelve, though only a very small number were said to be twelve to fourteen years old. Although no precise data were available on age distribution in the irregular forces, an account of 300 Meo recruits in 1968 stated that 30 percent were fourteen or under (a dozen being about ten); 30 percent were fifteen; and the rest were thirty-five or over.

### Military Pay

The rates of pay in the FAR established in 1965 were still in effect in 1969 (see table 9). The rates included provisions for payment of allowances.

The pay of the individual soldier or officer was determined by his length of service, duty location, possession of certificates of qualification or technical aptitudes, and marital status. Parachutists received extra pay that ranged from K170 to K720 per

*Table 9. Monthly Pay Scale of the Regular Forces of the Royal Lao Government, 1969*

(in kip)*

| Rank | Minimum | Maximum |
|---|---|---|
| Major General | 27,322 | 42,553 |
| Brigadier general | 23,979 | 39,211 |
| Colonel | 20,159 | 35,391 |
| Lieutenant colonel | 17,294 | 32,525 |
| Major | 14,668 | 30,377 |
| Captain | 12,540 | 27,415 |
| Lieutenant | 10,750 | 25,621 |
| Second lieutenant | 9,317 | 23,233 |
| Chief warrant officer | 8,000 | 17,748 |
| Sergeant major | 7,535 | 17,270 |
| Corporal | 2,950 | 7,816 |
| Private | 2,500 | 6,496 |

*Exchange rate used in pay scale was K500 equaled US$1 (see Glossary).
For value of kip see Glossary.

month for privates to K1,530 to K3,060 for officers above the rank of major. The flight pay of pilots was double the basic pay scale. In addition, certain senior officers received monthly benefits; for example, all general officers were paid an extra K8,400 as an "allowance for position" and K20,000 in lieu of housing. Certain positions for senior officers entitled their incumbents to additional special allowances.

The irregular troops were paid on a different basis. A private received K15,000 monthly. The pay of the Thai irregulars recruited for service in Laos was augmented by combat and other allowances.

### Training

The basic training of FAR recruits was minimal in 1971. In the past, basic training centers were established at several locations in Laos, but there were few data on their operations and level of activity. One center was located at Phou Khao Khouai, north of Vientiane, where draftees from Vientiane were taken for training. In many cases training was informal, carried on in the units to which recruits were assigned. The low level of literacy in Laos, estimated at 20 to 25 percent, was a factor adversely affecting the ability of the average recruit to absorb the more sophisticated parts of military training (see ch. 5, Health, Education, and Welfare). In addition to basic training, limited but unspecified numbers of noncommissioned officers and commissioned officers were trained within the concerned branches of the FAR in skills required for vehicle mechanics, communications, construction, plumbing, tailoring, and administration.

Foreign military influence and assistance continued to be prominent in the training of the FAR in 1971. Only a small French military mission was in royal government territory in accordance with the 1962 Geneva Agreement. No United States military training of conventional forces took place in Laos; the United States, however, was training Laotian army and air force personnel in Thailand and elsewhere. In the five years ending in June 1971, a total of 552 Laotians had been trained at specialist and general service schools in the United States. The United States also has provided training for air force pilots and mechanics outside Laos, including some in the United States and others in Thailand, where Laotians were taught to fly and perform limited maintenance on T-28 and C-47 aircraft and on H-34 helicopters.

In 1971 United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) personnel supervised the training of irregular forces and other paramilitary groups. The largest single contingent of irregulars was in Military Region II, under the command of Major General Vang Pao. There was no information available on the training of any self-defense forces or militia.

The United States has not released official data on the cost of training programs for the FAR. It was estimated in 1971 that about 10 percent of the estimated military assistance programs of US$500 million from 1962 through 1970 had been used for force improvement and modernization, including training.

### Veterans

Until 1960 responsibility for veterans and war victims was a function of the Ministry of National Defense and Veterans Affairs. Subsequently, a state secretaryship handled such matters until May 1966, when the royal government established a separate Ministry of Veterans and War Victims, usually referred to as the Ministry of Veterans Affairs.

The royal government has released no statistics on the number of servicemen released from the FAR, either retired or invalided out, and exact information was not available in 1971 on relief payments to which ex-military or civilian recipients might be entitled. The royal government budget for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1971, provided for the expenditure of K520.6 million by the ministry in that year. Of the total, K465 million were allotted to the three items of: discharge pay (slightly over half the total), relief (about one-quarter of the total), and the operation of a center for professional reeducation and regrading.

The ministry was reported to be responsible, in 1971, for several service functions, including a veterans' cooperative, an orthopedic center, a special discharge center, and a center for the disabled, in addition to the reeducation center. The ministry carried on a modest program of training in farming and furniture making and tried to find jobs for veterans. Its efforts were described as largely ineffective. Responsibility for the policy aspects of military pensions, however, was not placed in this ministry but in the Ministry of National Defense, and payment was made the responsibility of the Ministry of Finance.

## Capabilities

### Nature of Military Action in Laos

Until late 1968 the military actions in which the FAR was engaged were almost entirely small scale in numbers of men involved on either side—very seldom larger than company-sized or, at most, battalion-sized units. Typically, the actions were attacks on isolated positions, fighting for road control points and elevated spots, usually in lightly populated areas where there was no permanent political control. Another kind of action included reconnaissance missions, ambushes, or hit-and-run operations mounted from the enclaves held by each side within the territory of the other; these operations were small scale also. Essentially, the pattern of warfare prevailing until late 1968 consisted of offensives by the communist forces in the dry season and counteroffensives by the FAR during the wet season. In the aggregate these actions resulted in little change in the political situation in Laos.

In 1969 the pattern changed to an almost continuous and escalating series of military engagements. There was an increase in North Vietnamese troop strength in Laos, and the outcome was loss of more territory by the royal government. Relative territorial stability was, however, maintained through 1970, a situation that was described by a Western analyst as more a political than a military balance.

### Leadership

The officer corps of the FAR was composed for the most part of ethnic Lao. Its members came in general from the same few families that were prominent in all parts of Laotian national life and that could afford the education needed to qualify for commissioned rank. There have been some notable exceptions. One was General Kong Le, the son of a Phutai tribesman (one account states he was from a peasant Lao Theung family), who had little formal education and was commissioned from the ranks. He proved to be a vigorous combat officer and a leader who had charisma. Another well-known exception was Major General Vang Pao, the Meo commander of Military Region II.

Leadership was the chief shortcoming in the Laotian military establishment, according to evaluations of FAR effectiveness by foreign military officers, who noted that senior officers in the FAR were often selected on the basis of family, wealth, or political connections. Such officers tended to have limited military training or experience. The evaluations also cited inadequate leadership as one of the factors causing low morale in the FAR ranks. Other factors were insufficient rations, difficult field conditions, inadequate pay, and fear of North Vietnamese prowess. Another comment on the FAR was that leadership was probably the most important factor involved in improving the performance of Laotian military units and that some units responded well in the face of attack, particularly units with competent leaders.

Leadership in irregular and paramilitary units was more likely to be exercised by the traditional holders of tribal authority, in many cases of forces of the same ethnic origin. Among the Meo, at least, chiefs were carrying on the tribal tradtion of having to fight to defend themselves, as they had for over 200 years.

The FAR first attempted civic action activities among the population in the royal government areas in 1960. Nonetheless, the FAR remained one of the least politically aware and motivated armed forces in the world in the 1960s in the opinion of one qualified Western observer. The FAR leadership reportedly did little to demonstrate an identity between the national forces and the Laotian people, with whom the FAR officer corps was said to have very little rapport. Kong Le was a conspicuous exception, having attained excellent relations with both his troops and the people. The forces of several tribal military leaders, including Vang Pao, Thao Ly, and Jua Pao, also achieved good rapport with the people among whom they conducted their military operations.

### Combat Effectiveness

Evaluations by military observers of the combat effectiveness of the FAR have consistently differentiated between FAR performance against units of the Lao People's Liberation Army and that against North Vietnamese forces, especially in meeting attacks by the North Vietnamese. Such judgments usually rated the FAR's effectiveness considerably better against the liberation army than against the North Vietnamese, although individual instances varied because of differences in FAR leadership, troop morale, adequacy of firepower and air support, and the tactical situation. For instance, the commander of Military Region I (a major general and a brother of the king) received a rating of very good because of his ability to meet and defeat liberation army units; however, he was unable to cope with the North Vietnamese forces. The statistics of prisoners of war taken by the FAR from 1968 through early 1971 provided a qualified corroboration of the observations that the royal government's forces were more effective against the liberation army than against the North Vietnamese; the figures were reported as 2,494 liberation army prisoners and seventy-three North Vietnamese.

The irregulars were a more effective military force than was the royal army, according to observers, who stated in 1971 that the irregulars had become the cutting edge of the royal government military forces. They cited the statistics of the casualties inflicted and incurred by the two forces from 1968 through the first four months of 1971: for the irregular forces, the figures were 22,726 inflicted and 8,020 incurred; for the royal army, 8,522 and 3,664, respectively. The irregular forces were reportedly better disciplined and more capable of conducting independent unit operations than were the royal army troops. Other reports in early 1971 indicated, however, that the military effectiveness of the Meo especially had been adversely affected by attrition from both casualties and desertion. Desertion, in many cases, was seen by the Meo as a return to the man's primary responsibilities to his family rather than desertion of his military position. Their previously high morale also reportedly had suffered from the enforced movement away from their favored higher altitude to lower areas to which they were unaccustomed.

The air force was described in 1971 as having in its tactical arm one of the most effective indigenous combat units in Southeast Asia. Its pilots were said to be skillful, devoted to the job, and familiar with the terrain. Although no operational statistics were released, the air force was reported in April 1971 to have doubled from the previous year the number of T-28 bombing and AC-47 gunship sorties. Figures for losses of equipment and personnel during combat operations were not available. Any losses suffered by the air force would have been from enemy ground fire, since by early 1971 it had not encountered hostile air activity in its operations. By mid-1971 there were press reports of occasional sightings of North Vietnamese MIGs over Laotian territory, a potential new hazard for the T-28s of the air force.

## Foreign Influence and Assistance

### French

The French undertook the entire responsibility for the initial organization and training of the royal government's armed forces, starting in 1949. Laotian forces were formed in accordance with French military doctrine and concepts, equipped by French standards, and uniformed and distinguished in grade and rank in the French manner—a situation compatible with the acceptance by Laotians of French cultural influence generally. Direct French influence diminished, however, with the decrease in size of the French military mission permitted to remain in Laos by the Geneva agreements. In 1969 the mission numbered ninety-three officers and men. It was still in Laos in 1971 and continued military assistance on a small scale; the FAR retained discernible signs of the heritage of French influence.

### United States

In 1950 the United States entered into an agreement with France and the three states of Indochina on the furnishing of assistance under the Mutual Security Act of 1949. The agreement did not commit the United States to giving aid but determined the management of aid to be given. In 1955, after the Geneva agreement of the preceding year, the United States decided to undertake the training of the Laotian army and for that purpose established a civilian organization known as the Program Evaluation Office, attached to the United States Operations Mission in Vientiane. This group took over a large part of the training of the Laotian forces, acting officially under the responsibility of the French military mission. In addition, this group served as the channel for materiel assistance to the royal government's armed forces, administering the program through teams stationed in several towns throughout the country as well as in Vientiane.

In April 1961 the Program Evaluation Office became the uniformed Military Assistance and Advisory Group (MAAG). This organizational change took place at the height of the crisis in Laos preceding the Geneva Conference of 1962 (see ch. 3, Historical Setting). The MAAG contingent of about 400 men took part in training the royal government forces under General Phoumi Nosavan. The United States Army Special Forces attached to the MAAG were the first to recognize the importance of the ethnic minorities because of their qualities as fighting men and because of their strategic geographic location. Units known as the White Star Mobile Training Teams, the field training arm of the MAAG, proved effective in working with the Meo, who were already organized under Vang Pao in the mountains around the Plain of Jars.

The 1962 Geneva agreements, in part, prohibited "the introduction into Laos of armaments, munitions, and war materiel generally except for such quantities of conventional armaments as the Royal Government of Laos may consider necessary for the national defense of Laos" and banned all foreign troops from Laos except for a limited French military training mission (see Appendix). The MAAG and the White Star Mobile Training Teams, by then totaling 666 men, were withdrawn, and since that time the United States has not conducted direct military training of conventional forces within Laos. It has, however, continued to furnish military assistance to the royal government in the form of material and supplies, provided some training outside the country and, at the request of the royal government, carried on through the CIA the training of irregular forces in the country.

In 1971 the United States was providing military assistance to the royal government through a combination of two organizations, one of which operated exclusively in Thailand and the other in Laos. The deputy chief of the United States Military Assistance Command, Thailand, was responsible for the receipt in Thailand, storage there, and shipment to the border of Laos of matériel and supplies for the FAR. In Laos a component of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) known as the Requirements Office (USAID / RO) was responsible for contacting the FAR and for validating their military aid requirements. A number of USAID / RO) personnel (most of them stationed in Vientiane), in their liaison with the General Staff of National Defense suggested improvements, attempted to advise the FAR in maintenance and logistics, and served as the final control for United States-supplied military assistance materiel before it was turned over to the Laotian supply system. Their duties did not include, however, advising any FAR army and air force units in combat operations.

Some military assistance program functions were also performed by personnel of the office of the army attaché of the United States embassy in Vientiane. Of the 127 positions authorized for the army attache in 1971, twenty-four were reported to be filled by officers stationed in the five military regions, where among other duties they performed some end-use checking of matériel supplied to the FAR under the military assistance program.

Military assistance of this kind to Laos began in 1963 at a cost for the initial fiscal year of US$11.9 million. The annual cost of the program rose steeply thereafter and reached a reported figure of US$162.2 million for the fiscal year that ended June 30, 1971. The additional cost of support for the Laotian irregular forces has been reported to have increased annually because of the rising cost of ammunition and because support to the irregulars involved greater reliance on air transport as more territory fell under enemy control.

The United States was engaged in tactical and strategic air operations in Laos in 1971. This military activity started in 1964 at the royal government's request (see ch. 10, Foreign Relations). Initially the United States provided unarmed reconnaissance aircraft. After the first loss of such an aircraft by hostile action in June 1964, the United States furnished armed escort aircraft. Also in June Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma informed the cochairmen of the International Commission for Supervision and Control (commonly known as ICC) that the royal government considered the flights to be legal and that the "bombings of positions of the PL/VM (Pathet Lao-Viet Minh) aggressors by governmental decisions needs [sic] no further justification." In 1965 the United States began bombing the Ho Chi Minh Trail area within Laotian territory, not only in support of Laos but also in support of operations in the Republic Vietnam (South Vietnam). This was conducted jointly with the royal government air force in the initial stages.

United States air operations in Laos in 1971 were being carried out by both the United States Air Force and the United States Navy. In early 1971 the mission consisted of an average of 340 sorties a day, compared with a daily average of 350 sorties in 1970 and 400 in the first nine months of 1969. The B-52 sorties began, in February 1970, against northern Laos and were continuing in that area in 1971, though at a lower rate than in 1970. By 1971 the majority of such strikes, however, were said to be directed against the southeastern panhandle of Laos, where North Vietnamese troops were most heavily concentrated.

Air operations by United States aircraft required validation of the proposed targets by a process in which the United States ambassador assumed final responsibility for approval. About four-fifths of the tactical and B-52 bombing requests in 1970 were reportedly approved.

### Thai and South Vietnamese

In response to a request from the royal government, the Thai government has permitted volunteers of Thai nationality to serve with the irregular forces in Laos; unconfirmed reports in early 1971 referred to a new group of about 5,000. The expense of pay and allowances and of transportation to and from Thailand was being borne by the United States government. The Thai irregulars were said to have suffered heavy losses in Laos, although figures were not available; reports also were not available as of June 30, 1971, on their combat effectiveness under the operational control of the royal government.

Units of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (Armée de la République du Viêt-Nam—ARVN) entered southern Laos in

February 1971 in an operation known as Lam Son 719, directed against North Vietnamese forces in the Ho Chi Minh Trail area. The ARVN's deepest penetration into Laos was the town of Sepone (Tchepone) in eastern Savannakhet Province. The ARVN was withdrawn from Laos at the end of the operation, and it was stated in April 1971 that there was no South Vietnamese military presence in that area. There had been no additional reports by June 30, 1971, of ARVN operations on Laotian territory since the end of Lam Son 719.

## ARMED FORCES IN LAOS HOSTILE TO THE ROYAL LAO GOVERNMENT

Within the territory of the Kingdom of Laos, there were in 1971 the dissident military forces of the Lao People's Liberation Army, which included the leftist splinter of the former neutralist forces established by Kong Le in 1960, and two foreign military forces hostile to the royal government, those of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam) and of the PRC.

### Lao People's Liberation Army

The Lao People's Liberation Army was so named in October 1965 as a new designation for the Pathet Lao, the military force established by Prince Sonphanouvong in 1945. In 1971 the term *Pathet Lao*, though technically incorrect, was still in common use for the military arm of the NLHS and the communist People's Party of Laos (Phak Pasason Lao—PPL) (see ch. 9, Political Dynamics).

The strength of the Lao People's Liberation Army was estimated in April 1971 to be over 39,000 men, compared with an estimate of 45,000 in September 1969. Regular liberation army troops (serving under center, region, or province commanders) were said to number about 25,000 men, and about 15,000 men were estimated to be divided between regional (popular) troops and village militia (guerrillas). About 60 percent of liberation army strength was believed to be deployed in northern Laos in 1971, although there were contingents of them, in varying numbers, in each of the royal government military regions. Although there appeared to be no data on the ethnic composition of the liberation army, an account reported one battalion—considered generally typical—consisting of 147 Lao Theung and six ethnic Lao; this battalion was operating in northeastern Laos.

The liberation army was reported to be organized in 1969 into 110 battalions, with an average strength of 257 men per battalion; headquarters and support troops were estimated to total 16,400. The troops were heavily dependent on North Vietnam for weapons—of Soviet and PRC manufacture—and for ammunition, communications equipment, and other supplies essential for military needs. Their heavy equipment was reported to include amphibious armored gun carriers of Soviet make, armored cars, and howitzers. The commander of the liberation army was General Khamtay Siphandone; the minister of defense was Kaysone Phomvihan, secretary general of the PPL.

The liberation army was the largest NLHS organizational unit. It required a large part of the limited resources in the NLHS zone and performed many functions in addition to military operations. It was responsible for the maintenance of internal order and control in such activities as enforcing regulations on population movement, collecting and transporting rice, mobilizing people for work assignments, and distributing propaganda. Its soldiers were also assigned agricultural and engineering duties.

The armed forces of the Laotian communist movement owed their origin initially to the Viet Minh and the North Vietnamese, and in 1971 most of their units were reported to remain pervaded by North Vietnamese military advisers. Working relations between the Vietnamese and the Laotians were said to be good, despite some reports of dissension (see ch. 10, Foreign Relations). The North Vietnamese, during more than two decades of activity in Laos, have recruited Laotians for military as well as political training for the communist cause in Laos. The results of this training, in the view of one American analyst, would probably be a greater toughness and vitality in the liberation army as increasing numbers of Laotian trainees returned to fill posts in it.

The liberation army strength included a small force, perhaps no more than 200, of "leftist neutralists," remnants of the estimated 2,000 to 3,000 troops who defected from Kong Le on the Plain of Jars in April 1963. These troops were sometimes known as the Deuane neutralists, from the name of their commander, Colonel Deuane Sumalath; in NLHS terminology they were the "patriotic neutralists." The 2,300 men under General Khammouane Boupha in Phong Saly Province were nominally subordinate to Colonel Deuane. This force had been neutralist since 1961, when Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma named General Boupha as its commander, and in 1964 it joined the "patriotic neutralists."

The tactical employment of the liberation army has often been as a force behind an assault force of North Vietnamese, who might be special shock troops or specially trained commandos brought to Laos for a specific offensive operation. Such tactics, which initially confronted the FAR with well-trained forces for which it was a poor match, also had the result that the North Vietnamese, rather than the liberation army, incurred most of the casualties. Some observers thought that the Vietnamese were deliberately sparing the liberation army for future political competition with weakened noncommunist Laotian forces.

According to a report of practices in Xieng Khouang Province in 1969, liberation army strength was maintained through draft quotas passed down through the echelons of administration and the school system. This report said that almost every eligible male was in the army. The official minimum age was reported to be fifteen, but it appeared that conscription often began at age thirteen. The system was apparently effective, having increased the strength of the liberation army from 20,000 men in 1964, during a period of loss of population to royal government areas, to an estimated 45,000 in 1969. The little information available describing conditions in the liberation army indicated that in at least some instances the troops received much better medical care than did civilians. Each battalion in Xieng Khouang Province was said to have a well-staffed surgical unit, and the province was reputed to have a 100-bed military hospital that had laboratory and surgical units.

In early 1971 there was a report that a number of liberation army members, perhaps 200, had defected to the royal government in groups led by their officers and accompanied by their dependents. This defection was interpreted by the royal government as evidence of increasing friction between the liberation army and the North Vietnamese. Statistics for liberation army defectors in preceding years showed 270 in 1968, 401 in 1969, and 174 in 1970.

## North Vietnamese

The largest single contingent of armed forces in Laos in 1971 was the North Vietnamese, estimated to total 100,000 in the early part of the year. The difference between this estimate and that of 40,000 North Vietnamese troops estimated to be in Laos in March 1968 illustrated the continuing ability of the North Vietnamese to adjust the level of their military strength in Laos to the strategic and tactical requirements of their policy. The estimates of North Vietnamese troop strength did not include military personnel in transit through Laos to the Khmer Republic (Cambodia) and South Vietnam. In February 1971 North Vietnam reacted to the South Vietnamese military operations in southern Laos by increasing its forces there; by April 1971 there were an estimated 15,000 more North Vietnamese troops in Laos than there had been three months earlier, even though some forces had reportedly been withdrawn when the South Vietnamese operation ended.

The North Vietnamese forces seemed to have two main missions: operating the Ho Chi Minh Trail supply system through Laos and strengthening the position of the Laotian Communists. An associated aspect has been the effort to disguise the North Vietnamese military presence in Laos. North Vietnam has consistently maintained that there were no North Vietnamese troops in Laos and that it respected the Geneva agreements. During the South Vietnamese military operations in southern Laos in early 1971, however, a series of articles appeared in the North Vietnamese army newspaper giving detailed eyewitness accounts of North Vietnamese military activities that could have taken place only in Laos. An example was the report of a briefing that described "the trail" as more than a thousand miles in length, although its exact location was not stated.

Some 80 percent of the North Vietnamese forces in Laos were estimated to be deployed in the royal government's Military Region III. These two military regions occupy the Laotian panhandle, through which the Ho Chi Minh Trail passes. These forces consisted of infantry battalions; transport, engineering, and communications units; antiaircraft and artillery units; and advisers to liberation army units (700 in 1969 according to one estimate). In mid-1971 there were also reports of deployment in southern Laos of North Vietnamese surface-to-air missiles.

There was little information available concerning morale and attitudes within the North Vietnamese units serving in Laos. They were reported to have incurred most of the casualties in fighting the FAR, especially when employed as assault forces in offensive operations; however, the forces so used were often specially trained and presumably highly motivated units, sometimes sent into Laos for a specific action and then withdrawn. Relatively few North Vietnamese prisoners of war have been taken by the FAR—a total of seventy-three from 1968 through early 1971—and during the same period there were fifty-two North Vietnamese defectors.

### People's Republic of China

The military forces of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in Laos were estimated in early 1971 to total between 14,000 and 20,000 men. The lower estimate included 3,000 to 3,500 in antiaircraft artillery units; the higher put 10,500 to 11,000 in that category. The others were construction workers.

The presence of these forces in northern Laos was based on an agreement between the royal government and the PRC, signed in January 1962, that permitted the PRC to build a road from Yunnan Province in southwest PRC to Phong Saly, the capital of Phong Saly Province. In 1971 extensions of the road beyond Phong Saly, apparently without further royal government sanction, were underway. It was reported that by mid-1971 an all-weather dual-lane highway would extend from the Yunnan border to Muong Houn in western Luang Prabang Province. In mid-1971 there was no indication of further extension work on this road to the west toward Thailand. A branch extending southeast of Phong Saly needed only a ferry or bridge over the Ou River to connect with the reconstructed road from Dien Bien Phu into Laos (see ch. 13, Trade and Transportation).

The Chinese were reported in early 1971 to have 395 radar-directed antiaircraft weapons along the road, an increase of about 100 since mid-1970. They included guns said to be effective up to 68,000 feet.

## INTERNAL SECURITY IN THE ROYAL LAO GOVERNMENT AREA

### Attitudes and Social Controls

The teachings of Buddhism are for the ethnic Lao the main influence on their views of social organization and relations (see ch. 4, Social Systems; ch. 6, Religion). The Constitution of 1947 made Buddhism the established religion. This official status has lent implicit support to the Lao social hierarchy. In other ethnic groups the sanctions of custom and tribal authority have provided an effective basis for maintaining established social relationships. Though the basis for social order differed among the ethnic divisions of the kingdom's population, all groups were generally similar in their respect for constituted authority.

The extensive movement of people to and within royal government territory in the course of warfare did not appear to have caused a significant deterioration in security. According to outside observers, the social cohesiveness of the people who moved in village groups, thus keeping their local organization, leadership, and social restraints intact, counteracted the influences that might weaken accepted social values during forced migration and resettlement. Among the hill tribes, social organization was geared to frequent moves of entire groups (see ch. 4, Social Systems). Refugee groups in 1971 were described as self-policing through their own social organizations; however, police detachments were assigned to the main groups. The police performed security duties, such as screening individuals, as well as regular law enforcement and crime prevention duties.

The social structure of Laos was affected but not destroyed because the warfare was, until late 1968, conducted in sparsely populated regions. These military actions and the intensified and continuous hostilities after that date were not accompanied by a high degree of terrorism directed against the civilian population. The rural population was relatively secure in spite of some kidnappings, assassinations of local government officials, and road ambushes (a few political assassinations took place in both royal government and NLHS territories). The impact of hostilities was greater on the hill tribes than it was on the lowland people. In general, the coups and countercoups and other political events, mainly in Vientiane, did not result in a breakdown of social order even when the local law enforcement agencies temporarily disappeared, as happened when Kong Le's troops disarmed the Vientiane police during the coup of August 1960.

## The Lao National Police

### Background

The royal government reorganized its police services and forces several times between initial independence in 1949 and 1965. In the early steps several previously autonomous services, such as the gendarmerie and the security police, were consolidated into a single Laotian police service. The consolidation was largely completed by 1955, and that year the United States began a training program for the unified service. Until 1961 the United States furnished advisers, support in weapons, uniforms, vehicles, and communications equipment, and counterpart funds for construction of precinct stations and of the Lao National Police Training Center outside Vientiane. The training and assistance program was discontinued between 1961 and 1965, during the period when the Laotian police were subject to military control and were, in effect, a paramilitary organization known as the Directorate of National Coordination.

In 1965 the police were reconstituted as a separate organization renamed the Lao National Police. They were removed from the Ministry of National Security, which was reorganized at the same time, and placed under civilian control in the Ministry of Interior. The United States resumed its civil police assistance program that year. In mid-1971 Lao National Police organization and administration were operating in general accordance with this civilian control concept of law enforcement agencies.

### Organization and Strength

The stated mission of the Lao National Police is "to maintain public security and the execution of laws and regulations and to insure maintenance of order in collaboration with the armed forces and public services of the realm." A state of emergency declared by the prime minister on February 17, 1971, did not affect the mission of the police, not did it change their powers or authority in law enforcement. The royal government had previously, on July 23, 1970, declared a state of emergency in the six southern provinces (see ch. 9, Political Dynamics). The police organization remained subordinate to the minister of interior.

The Lao National Police were under the direction of a chief known as the director general, whose directorate functioned as police headquarters for the national force, which was organized regionally into the metropolitan police of Vientiane and the territorial police of the provinces. The police organization included administrative, logistics, communications, and training services. In addition to the operating force of regular uniformed police, three special units also existed: the special police (security) of 180 men, the judicial police of 102 men, and the immigration police of 109 men. Of the total police strength of 5,498 men (including 100 policewomen) provided for in the royal government budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 1970, only the 102 officers of the judicial police had the formal power of arrest.

The police directorate general in Vientiane directed all police components in the country; however, provincial commissioners of police reported not only to their central headquarters on operational matters but also to their respective provincial governors as the senior civilian authorities in the provinces. The provincial police commissioners also participated as ranking royal government officials in provincial administrative councils. Police organization at the district level was similar, except that the district chief was invested with police responsibility and could issue orders directly to the district police branch. Police strength in the provinces was 3,491, varying from lows of twenty-eight nominally assigned to Houa Phan and thirty-two to Phong Saly provinces, where effective royal government administrative authority was minimal, to highs of 476 in Vientiane and 559 in Savannakhet provinces. No information was available on redepolyment of police detachments that may have resulted from the loss of royal government territory in 1971.

Police pay and allowances were reported in 1971 to follow a scale in force for the royal government civil service and the FAR. Details of pay for the police grades and ranks were not available. The comparability of grades and pay made possible the transfer of personnel among the three branches of government employment. In the case of the police, such transfers were said to be for the most part the shifting of officers to and from the FAR, though the extent of the practice was not known. Grades within the police followed French nomenclature, ranging upward from probationary policemen and brigadiers in the ranks to commissioners and controllers in the officer ranks; the highest rank was that of principal controller.

In 1971 the national police was at full complement and described as a stable force having a low attribution rate among its voluntary members. The literacy rate among policemen was said to be 50 percent, which was about double the estimated national literacy rate; it was not known whether the difference was because of selectivity in choosing recruits or because of inservice educational programs. Apparently, in 1971 the police had not felt the effects of the overall manpower shortage. In the late 1960s some 600 men were absorbed from the neutralist police force under Kong Le's command.

In the performance of their routine patrol and other duties, which included firefighting in the larger cities, the police performed a governmental function that the general population accepted. The police force and individual policemen enjoyed a favorable social standing, which contributed to effective performance. United States observers considered the Lao National Police of 1971 to be a professional organization, effective in carrying out its mission.

### Training

Police training was a major element of the United States civil police project in 1971. It included local and participant training and equipment as well as advisers to the national police concerning organizational procedures and operations. The training encompassed all facets of police operations. High-ranking police officers attended the senior course at the International Police Academy in Washington, and middle-level officers attended the general course there. When training in communications, vehicle and weapons maintenance, and other specialized fields could not be accomplished in Laos, participants were trained in Thailand. By mid-1971 the cumulative totals of trainees under the project were fifty-five in the United States, 140 in Thailand, and 2,304 in Laos.

The Lao National Police Training Center was the main police training facility in the country. Courses were given in four categories; recruit training, cadet officer training, advanced courses for senior staff and noncommissioned officers, and specialist training in such fields as fingerprint classification and communications. Supplementary training was carried on at other installations on the maintenance of communications equipment, vehicles, generators, and weapons and in warehousing and logistics.

### The Penal System

Very little information was available on the royal government's prison and correctional system in 1971 for either civilian or military prisoners. The Ministry of Justice was responsible for the prison system. Its budget for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1971, provided for 300 employees in the penitentiary service. The royal government was reported to have built a new and modern national prison several miles north of Vientiane.

The Laotian legal code remained, in 1971, essentially unchanged from that introduced by the French. The penalties and sentences for offenses against the law continued to be based on the code—modified by the requirements of Laotian custom—promulgated by the French colonial government in 1932. In 1964 the royal government appointed a commission to revise and codify existing laws and to recommend changes. It was to include revising and updating the penal code and the code of criminal procedures. The commission seemed to have become inactive; no results of its work had been announced by mid-1971. Meanwhile, the French cultural mission in Laos has continued to maintain French influence in this sphere of government activity by providing the head of the Royal Institute of Law and Administration (see ch. 5, Health, Education, and Welfare; ch, 8, Political System and Values).

## SECURITY IN THE LAO PATRIOTIC FRONT AREA

Little information was available on the state of security in areas controlled by the Lao Patriotic Front (Neo Lao Hak Sat—NLHS) in 1971 or on the organizations responsible for the maintenance of order. The liberation army was formally responsible for security; it seemed probable that the elements most likely to be assigned security duties were its local units, such as the regional (popular) forces serving at district or canton level and the militia (guerrilla) units of cantons and villages. Refugees from NLHS-administered territory in 1969 mentioned North Vietnamese advisers to the police at all administrative echelons but did not provide descriptions of specific police organization, functions, or activities. The advisers perhaps dealt with the police functions of liberation army units.

Security precautions were apparently not the only consideration in the NLHS system of administrative controls. Reported restrictions such as on travel and personal freedoms, pervasive throughout the NLHS area, were presumably intended to create the controlled environment needed to achieve long-range political goals and help the immediate requirements of recruiting soldiers, collecting taxes, and assigning work tasks. In spite of these security controls, however, tens of thousands of people have managed to flee NLHS territory.

In punishing infractions of law and unacceptable behavior, NLHS authorities were reported to stress reeducation rather than coercion. Minor infractions were handled and judged by local authorities, who sentenced those guilty of such offenses as petty theft to "self-criticism." For serious infractions, including attempts to escape, profiteering, adultery, and passing information to royal government agents, the accused were tried by "people's courts" convened by visiting cadres (see Glossary). Confession by the accused and imposition of a jail sentence were the result.

Reeducation was reported to continue while jail sentences were being served. The degree of change by the prisoner shown by additional confessions and other actions was said to be a basis for reduction of the sentence originally imposed. Members of a prisoner's family might assist in the reduction by their labor contributions (see ch. 4, Social Systems).

The handling of security matters was not necessarily uniform in all parts of the territory administered by the NLHS. According to reports, variations of directives of the People's Party of Laos might be adopted at the discretion of local party officials if they thought village chiefs too "unprogressive" to accept and carry out certain provisions. One report cited the deletion of the section of a directive providing for the incarceration of people for treason, profiteering, subversion, and other political crimes and also cited a similar local decision to strike out a passage on universal military conscription for men. The reports did not indicate the bases for the cadres' judgment or how widespread this practice was; judging from the relative success of NLHS authorities in the recruitment of soldiers, collection of taxes, and assignment of work tasks, it seemed probable that exceptions to enforcement of the whole system were few.

# APPENDIX

# THE GENEVA AGREEMENT OF 1962

An international agreement on the neutrality of Laos was concluded at Geneva by a conference of fourteen nations on July 23, 1962. Commonly referred to as the Geneva Agreement of 1962 (or 1962 Geneva Agreement), this accord was composed of two parts: the Declaration on the Neutrality of Laos, which included a statement of neutrality by the Royal Lao Government, and the Protocol to the Declaration on the Neutrality of Laos. The declaration was signed by the plenipotentiaries of the thirteen governments, other than Laos, taking part in the conference; the protocol was signed by all fourteen governments. The English texts of the declaration and protocol are as follows:

## DECLARATION ON THE NEUTRALITY OF LAOS

The Governments of the Union of Burma, the Kingdom of Cambodia, Canada, the People's Republic of China, the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam, the Republic of France, the Republic of India, the Polish People's Republic, the Republic of Viet-Nam, the Kingdom of Thailand, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America, whose representatives took part in the International Conference on the Settlement of the Laotian Question, 1961-1962;

Welcoming the presentation of the statement of neutrality by the Royal Government of Laos of July 9, 1962, and taking note of this statement, which is, with the concurrence of the Royal Government of Laos, incorporated in the present Declaration as an integral part thereof, and the text of which is as follows:

> THE ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF LAOS.
>
> Being resolved to follow the path of peace and neutrality in conformity with the interests and aspirations of the Laotian people, as well as the principles of the Joint Communiqué of Zurich dated June 22, 1961, and of the Geneva Agreements of 1954, in order to build a peaceful, neutral, independent, democratic, unified and prosperous Laos, Solemnly declares that:
>
> (1) It will resolutely apply the five principles of peaceful co-existence in foreign relations, and will develop friendly relations and establish diplomatic relations with all countries, the neighbouring countries first and foremost, on the basis of equality and of respect for the independence and sovereignty of Laos;
>
> (2) It is the will of the Laotian people to protect and ensure respect for the sovereignty, independence, neutrality, unity, and territorial integrity of Laos;
>
> (3) It will not resort to the use or threat of force in any way which might impair the peace of other countries, and will not interfere in the internal affairs of other countries;
>
> (4) It will not enter into any military alliance or into any agreement, whether military or otherwise, which is inconsistent with the neutrality of the Kingdom of Laos; it will not allow the establishment of any foreign

military base on Laotian territory, nor allow any country to use Laotian territory for military purposes or for the purposes of interference in the internal affairs of other countries, nor recognise the protection of any alliance or military coalition, including SEATO.

(5) It will not allow any foreign interference in the internal affairs of the Kingdom of Laos in any form whatsoever;

(6) Subject to the provisions of Article 5 of the Protocol, it will require the withdrawal from Laos of all foreign troops and military personnel, and will not allow any foreign troops or military personnel to be introduced into Laos;

(7) It will accept direct and unconditional aid from all countries that wish to help the Kingdom of Laos build up an independent and autonomous national economy on the basis of respect for the sovereignty of Laos;

(8) It will respect the treaties and agreements signed in conformity with the interests of the Laotian people and of the policy of peace and neutrality of the Kingdom, in particular the Geneva Agreements of 1962, and will abrogate all treaties and agreements which are contrary to those principles.

This statement of neutrality by the Royal Government of Laos shall be promulgated constitutionally and shall have the force of law.

The Kingdom of Laos appeals to all the States participating in the International Conference on the Settlement of the Laotian Question, and to all other States, to recognise the sovereignty, independence, neutrality, unity and territorial integrity of Laos, to conform to these principles in all respects, and to refrain from any action inconsistent therewith.

Confirming the principles of respect for the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Laos and non-interference in its internal affairs which are embodied in the Geneva Agreements of 1954;

Emphasising the principle of respect for the neutrality of the Kingdom of Laos;

Agreeing that the above-mentioned principles constitute a basis for the peaceful settlement of the Laotian question;

Profoundly convinced that the independence and neutrality of the Kingdom of Laos will assist the peaceful democratic development of the Kingdom of Laos and the achievement of national accord and unity in that country, as well as the strengthening of peace and security in South-East Asia;

1. Solemnly declare, in accordance with the will of the Government and people of the Kingdom of Laos, as expressed in the statement of neutrality by the Royal Government of Laos of July 9, 1962, that they recognise and will respect and observe in every way the sovereignty, independence, neutrality, unity and territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Laos.

2. Undertake, in particular, that

(a) they will not commit or participate in any way in any act which might directly or indirectly impair the sovereignty, independence, neutrality, unity or territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Laos;

(b) they will not resort to the use or threat of force or any other measure which might impair the peace of the Kingdom of Laos;

(c) they will refrain from all direct or indirect interference in the internal affairs of the Kingdom of Laos;

(d) they will not attach conditions of a political nature to any assistance which they may offer or which the Kingdom of Laos may seek;

(e) they will not bring the Kingdom of Laos in any way into any military alliance or any other agreement, whether military or otherwise, which is inconsistent with her neutraility, nor invite or encourage her to enter into any such alliance or to conclude any such agreement.

(f) they will respect the wish of the Kingdom of Laos not to recognise the protection of any alliance or military coalition, including SEATO;

(g) they will not introduce into the Kingdom of Laos foreign troops or military personnel in any form whatsoever, nor will they in any way facilitate or connive at the introduction of any foreign troops or military personnel;

(h) they will not establish nor will they in any way facilitate or connive at the establishment in the Kingdom of Laos of any foreign military base, foreign strong point or other foreign military installation of any kind;

(i) they will not use the territory of the Kingdom of Laos for interference in the internal affairs of other countries;

(j) they will not use the territory of any country, including their own for interference in the internal affairs of the Kingdom of Laos.

3. Appeal to all other States to recognise, respect and observe in every way the sovereignty, independence and neutrality, and also the unity and territorial integrity, of the Kingdom of Laos and to refrain from any action inconsistent with these principles or with other provisions of the present Declaration.

4. Undertake, in the event of a violation or threat of violation of the sovereignty, independence, neutrality, unity or territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Laos, to consult jointly with the Royal Government of Laos and among themselves in order to consider measures which might prove to be necessary to ensure the observance of these principles and the other provisions of the present Declaration.

5. The present Declaration shall enter into force on signature and together with the statement of neutrality by the Royal Government of Laos of July 9, 1962, shall be regarded as constituting an international agreement. The present Declaration shall be deposited in the archives of the Governments of the United Kingdom and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which shall furnish certified copies thereof to the other signatory States and to all the other States of the world.

In witness whereof, the undersigned Plenipotentiaries have signed the present Declaration.

Done in two copies in Geneva this twenty-third day of July one thousand nine hundred and sixty-two in the English, Chinese, French, Laotian and Russian languages, each text being equally authoritative.

## PROTOCOL TO THE DECLARATION ON THE NEUTRALITY OF LAOS

The Governments of the Union of Burma, the Kingdom of Cambodia, Canada, the People's Republic of China, the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam, the Republic of France, the Republic of India, the Kingdom of Laos, the Polish People's Republic, the Republic of Viet-Nam, the Kingdom of Thailand, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America;

Having regard to the Declaration on the Neutrality of Laos of July 23, 1962;

Have agreed as follows:

### ARTICLE 1

For the purposes of this Protocol

(a) the term "foreign military personnel" shall include members of foreign military missions, foreign military advisers, experts, instructors, consultants, technicians, observers and any other foreign military persons, including those serving in any armed forces in Laos, and foreign civilians connected with the supply, maintenance, storing and utilization of war materials;

(b) the term "the Commission" shall mean the International Commission for Supervision and Control in Laos set up by virtue of the Geneva Agreements of 1954 and composed of the representatives of Canada, India and Poland, with the representative of India as Chairman;

(c) the term "the Co-Chairmen" shall mean the Co-Chairmen of the International Conference for the Settlement of the Laotian Question, 1961-1962, and their successors in the offices of Her Britannic Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics respectively;

(d) the term "the members of the Conference" shall mean the Governments of countries which took part in the International Conference for the Settlement of the Laotian Question, 1961-1962.

### ARTICLE 2

All foreign regular and irregular troops, foreign para-military formations and foreign military personnel shall be withdrawn from Laos in the shortest time possible and in any case the withdrawal shall be completed not later than thirty days after the Commission has notified the Royal Government of Laos that in accordance with Articles 3 and 10 of this Protocol its inspection teams are present at all points of withdrawal from Laos. These points shall be determined by the Royal Government of Laos in accordance with Article 3 within thirty days after the entry into force of this Protocol. The inspection teams shall be present at these points and the Commission shall notify the Royal Government of Laos thereof within fifteen days after the points have been determined.

### ARTICLE 3

The withdrawal of foreign regular and irregular troops, foreign para-military formations and foreign military personnel shall take place only along such routes and through such points as shall be determined by the Royal Government of Laos in consultation with the Commission. The Commission shall be notified in advance of the point and time of all such withdrawals.

### ARTICLE 4

The introduction of foreign regular and irregular troops, foreign para-military formations and foreign military personnel into Laos is prohibited.

### ARTICLE 5

Note is taken that the French and Laotian Governments will conclude as soon as possible an arrangement to transfer the French military installations in Laos to the Royal Government of Laos.

If the Laotian Government considers it necessary, the French Government may as an exception leave in Laos for a limited period of time a precisely limited number of French military instructors for the purpose of training the armed forces of Laos.

The French and Laotian Governments shall inform the members of the Conference, through the Co-Chairmen, of their agreement on the question of the transfer of the French military installations in Laos and of the employment of French military instructors by the Laotian Government.

### ARTICLE 6

The introduction into Laos of armaments, munitions and war material generally, except such quantities of conventional armaments as the Royal Government of Laos may consider necessary for the national defence of Laos, is prohibited.

### ARTICLE 7

All foreign military persons and civilians captured or interned during the course of hostilities in Laos shall be released within thirty days after the entry into force of this Protocol and handed over by the Royal Government of Laos to the representatives of the Governments of the countries of which they are nationals in order that they may proceed to the destination of their choice.

### ARTICLE 8

The Co-Chairmen shall periodically receive reports from the Commission. In addition the Commission shall immediately report to the Co-Chairmen any violations or threats of violations of this Protocol, all significant steps which it takes in pursuance of this Protocol, and also any other important information which may assist the Co-Chairmen in carrying out their functions. The Commission may at any time seek help from the Co-Chairmen in the performance of its duties, and the Co-Chairmen may at any time make recommendations to the Commission exercising general guidance.

The Co-Chairmen shall circulate the reports and any other important information from the Commission to the members of the Conference.

The Co-Chairmen shall excercise supervision over the observance of this Protocol and the Declaration on the Neutrality of Laos.

The Co-Chairmen will keep the members of the Conference constantly informed and when appropriate will consult with them.

### ARTICLE 9

The Commission shall, with the concurrence of the Royal Government of Laos, supervise and control the cease-fire in Laos.

The Commission shall exercise these functions in full co-operation with the Royal Government of Laos and within the framework of the Cease-Fire Agreement or cease-fire arrangements made by the three political forces in Laos, or the Royal Government of Laos. It is understood that responsibility for the execution of the cease-fire shall rest with the three parties concerned and with the Royal Government of Laos after its formation.

### ARTICLE 10

The Commission shall supervise and control the withdrawal of foreign regular and irregular troops, foreign para-military formations and foreign military personnel. Inspection teams sent by the Commission for these purposes shall be present for the period of the withdrawal at all points of withdrawal from Laos determined by the Royal Government of Laos in consultation with the Commission in accordance with Article 3 of this Protocol.

### ARTICLE 11

The Commission shall investigate cases where there are reasonable grounds for considering that a violation of the provisions of Article 4 of this Protocol has occurred.

It is understood that in the exercise of this function the Commission is acting with the concurrence of the Royal Government of Laos. It shall carry out its investigations in full co-operation with the Royal Government of Laos and shall immediately inform the Co-Chairmen of any violations or threats of violations of Article 4, and also of all significant steps which it takes in pursuance of this Article in accordance with Article 8.

### ARTICLE 12

The Commission shall assist the Royal Government of Laos in cases where the Royal Government of Laos considers that a violation of Article 6 of this Protocol may have taken place. This assistance will be rendered at the request of the Royal Government of Laos and in full co-operation with it.

### ARTICLE 13

The Commission shall exercise its functions under this Protocol in close co-operation with the Royal Government of Laos. It is understood that the Royal Government of Laos at all levels will render the Commission all possible assistance in the performance by the Commission of these functions and also will take all necessary measures to ensure the security of the Commission and its inspection teams during their activities in Laos.

### ARTICLE 14

The Commission functions as a single organ of the International Conference for the Settlement of the Laotian Question, 1961-1962. The members of the Commission will work harmoniously and in co-operation with each other with the aim of solving all questions within the terms of reference of the Commission.

Decisions of the Commission on questions relating to violations of Articles 2, 3, 4 and 6 of this Protocol or of the cease-fire referred to in Article 9, conclusions on major questions sent to the Co-Chairmen and all recommendations by the Commission shall be adopted unanimously. On other questions, including procedural questions, and also questions relating to the initiation and carrying out of investigations (Article 15), decisions of the Commission shall be adopted by majority vote.

### ARTICLE 15

In the exercise of its specific functions which are laid down in the relevant articles of this Protocol the Commission shall conduct investigations (directly or by sending inspection teams), when there are reasonable grounds for considering that a violation has occurred. These investigations shall be carried out at the request of the Royal Government of Laos or on the initiative of the Commission, which is acting with the concurrence of the Royal Government of Laos.

In the latter case decisions on initiating and carrying out such investigations shall be taken in the Commission by majority vote.

The Commission shall submit agreed reports on investigations in which differences which may emerge between members of the Commission on particular questions may be expressed.

The conclusions and recommendations of the Commission resulting from investigations shall be adopted unanimously.

### ARTICLE 16

For the exercise of its functions the Commission shall, as necessary, set up inspection teams, on which the three member-States of the Commission shall be equally represented. Each member-State of the Commission shall ensure the presence of its own representatives both on the Commission and on the inspection teams, and shall promptly replace them in the event of their being unable to perform their duties.

It is understood that the dispatch of inspection teams to carry out various specific tasks takes place with the concurrence of the Royal Government of Laos. The points to which the Commission and its inspection teams go for the purposes of investigation and their length of stay at those points shall be determined in relation to the requirements of the particular investigation.

### ARTICLE 17

The Commission shall have at its disposal the means of communication and transport required for the performance of its duties. These as a rule will be provided to the Commission by the Royal Government of Laos for payment on mutually acceptable terms, and those which the Royal Government of Laos cannot provide will be acquired by the Commission from other sources. It is understood that the means of communication and transport will be under the administrative control of the Commission.

### ARTICLE 18

The costs of the operations of the Commission shall be borne by the members of the Conference in accordance with the provisions of this article.

(a) The Governments of Canada, India and Poland shall pay the personal salaries and allowances of their nationals who are members of their delegations to the Commission and its subsidiary organs.

(b) The primary responsibility for the provision of accommodation for the Commission and its subsidiary organs shall rest with the Royal Government of Laos, which shall also provide such other local services as may be appropriate. The Commission shall charge to the Fund referred to in sub-paragraph (c) below any local expenses not borne by the Royal Government of Laos.

(c) All other capital or running expenses incurred by the Commission in the exercise of its functions shall be met from a Fund to which all the members of the Conference shall contribute in the following proportions:

The Governments of the People's Republic of China, France, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom and the United States of America shall contribute 17.6 per cent each.

The Governments of Burma, Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, Laos, the Republic of Viet Nam and Thailand shall contribute 1.5 per cent each.

The Governments of Canada, India and Poland as members of the Commission shall contribute 1 per cent each.

### ARTICLE 19

The Co-Chairmen shall at any time, if the Royal Government of Laos so requests, and in any case not later than three years after the entry into force of this Protocol, present a report with appropriate recommendations on the question of the termination of the Commission to the members of the Conference for their consideration. Before making such a report the Co-Chairmen shall hold consultations with the Royal Government of Laos and the Commission.

### ARTICLE 20

This Protocol shall enter into force on signature.

It shall be deposited in the archives of the Governments of the United Kingdom and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which shall furnish certified copies thereof to the other signatory States and to all other States of the world.

In witness whereof, the undersigned Plenipotentiaries have signed this Protocol.

Done in two copies in Geneva this twenty-third day of July one thousand and nine hundred and sixty-two in the English, Chinese, French, Laotian and Russian languages, each text being equally authoritative.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

## Section I. Social

Adams, Nina S., and McCoy, Alfred W. (eds.) *Laos: War and Revolution.* (Harper Colophon Books Series, CN, 221.) New York: Harper and Row, for the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars, 1970.

Archaimbault, Charles. *The New Year Ceremony at Basak (South Laos).* (Data Paper No. 78, Southeast Asia Program, Department of Asia Studies.) Ithaca: Cornell University, January 1971.

— —. "Religious Structures in Laos," *Journal of the Siam Society* [Bangkok], LII, No. 1, 1964, 57-74.

Barney, G. Linwood. "The Meo: An Incipient Church," *Practical Anthropology,* IV, No. 2, March-April 1957, 31-50.

Benedict, Paul K. "Languages and Literature of Indochina," *Far Eastern Quarterly,* VI, No. 4, August 1947, 379-389.

Berval, René de. *Kingdom of Laos: The Land of the Million Elephants and of the White Parasol.* Saigon: France-Asia, 1959.

Bloodworth, Dennis. *An Eye for the Dragon: Southeast Asia Observed, 1954-1970.* New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 1970.

"A Brief History of the Pathet Lao: 1945-1970," *SEATO Trends and Highlights* (Bangkok) RO / TH / 303, December 1, 1970, 11-19.

Briggs, L. P. *The Ancient Khmer Empire.* Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1951.

British Information Services. *Laos.* London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, June 1970.

Broderick, A. H. *Little Vehicle: Cambodia and Laos.* (Human Relations Area Files: Indochina, Source No. 25.) London: Hutchinson. 1948.

Burchett, Wilfred. *The Second Indochina War: Cambodia and Laos.* New York: International Publishers, 1970.

Busch, Noel F. *Thailand: An Introduction to Modern Siam.* (2d ed.) Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1964.

Chomsky, Noam. *At War with Asia: Essays on Indochina.* (Vintage Series, V-640.) New York: Random House, September 1970.

"Communist Attitudes Towards Negotiations in Laos," *SEATO Trends and Highlights* (Bangkok) RO / TH / 302. November 1, 1970, 3-14.

Condominas, Georges. "The Lao." Pages 9-27 in Nina S. Adams and Alfred W. McCoy (eds.), *Laos: War and Revolution.* New York: Harper and Row, for the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars, 1970.

——. "Notes sur le Bouddhisme populaire en milieu rural Lao (I)," *Archives de Sociologie des Religions* [Paris], XXV, January-June 1968, 81-110.

——. "Notes sur le Bouddhisme populaire en milieu rural Lao (II)," *Archives de Sociologie des Religions* [Paris], XXVI, July-December 1968, 111-150.

Decornoy, Jacques. "Forgotten Laos: The Next-Door War," *Atlas*, XVII, No. 4, April 1969, 55-59.

d'Orleans, Henri. *Around Tonkin and Siam.* (Human Relations Area Files: Indochina, Source No. 10.) London: Chapman and Hall, 1894.

deReinach, Lucien. *Le Laos français.* (Human Relations Area Files: Indochina, Source No. 149.) Paris: A. Charles, 1901.

Dobby, Ernest H. G. *Southeast Asia.* (10th ed.) London: University of London Press, 1969.

Dobby, Ernest H. G., and Wyatt, D. K. "Laos." Pages 712-714 in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, XIII. Chicago: William Benton, 1969.

Dommen, Arthur J. *Conflict in Laos: The Politics of Neutralization.* (Rev. ed.) New York: Praeger, 1971.

Durdin, Tillman. *Southeast Asia.* (A New York Times Byline Book.) New York: Atheneum, 1966.

Embree, John. "Ethnic Groups of Northern Southeast Asia." New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1950 (mimeo.).

——. "Visit to Laos, French Indochina, " *Washington Academy of Science Journal.* XXXIX, May 1949, 149-157.

Engineering Agency for Resources Inventories and the Tennessee Valley Authority. *Atlas of the Physical, Economic and Social Resources of the Lower Mekong Basin.* N.pl.: United Nations, September 1968.

Fall, Bernard B. "The Pathet Lao: A 'Liberation' Party." Pages 173-197 in Robert A. Scalapino (ed.), *The Communist Revolution in Asia: Tactics, Goals, and Achievements.* Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1965.

*The Far East and Australasia, 1970: A Survey and Directory of Asia and the Pacific.* London: Europa Publications, 1970.

Far Eastern Association of Tropical Medicine. *L'Indochine français.* Hanoi: S. Tampin, 1939.

*Far Eastern Economic Review Yearbook, 1970.* Hong Kong: FEER, 1970.

Fitzgerald, Charles P. *A Concise History of East Asia.* New York: Praeger, 1966.

Foreign Broadcast Information Service. *Broadcasting Stations of the World,* Part I: Amplitude Modulation Broadcasting Stations According to Country and City. Washington: GPO, 1971.

Friedman, Edward, and Selden, Mark (eds.). *America's Asia: Dissenting Essays on Asia-American Relations.* (Vintage Series, V-662.) New York: Random House, 1971.

Fryer, Donald W. *Emerging Southeast Asia.* New York: McGraw-Hill, 1970.

Gettleman, Marvin, et al. *Conflict in Indo-China: A Reader on the Widening War in Laos and Cambodia.* New York: Random House, 1970.

Goodman, Allan E. "The Political Implications of Urban Development in Southeast Asia: The 'Fragment' Hypothesis," *Economic Development and Cultural Change,* XX, No. 1, October 1971, 117-130.

Gourou, Pierre, *Land Utilization in French Indochina.* 3 vols. (Human Relations Area Files: Indochina, Source No. 2.) Washington: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1945.

Groslier, Bernard. *The Art of Indochina, Melting Pot of Asia.* New York: Crown Publishers, 1962.

Hall, D. G. E. *A History of South-East Asia.* (3d ed.) (Macmillan Student Editions Series.) London: Macmillan, 1968.

Halpern, Joel M. *Economy and Society of Laos: A Brief Survey.* (Southeast Asia Studies: Monograph Series, No. 5.) New Haven: Yale University, 1964.

——. *Government, Politics, and Social Structure in Laos: A Study of Tradition and Innovation.* (Southeast Asia Studies: Monograph Series, No. 4.) New Haven: Yale University, 1964.

——. "Observations on the Social Structure of the Lao Elite," *Asian Survey,* I. July 15, 1961, 25-32.

——. *The Role of the Chinese in Lao Society.* (P-2161.) Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, December 15, 1960.

Hammer, Ellen J. *The Struggle for Indochina.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1954.

Henderson, John W., et al. *Area Handbook for Thailand.* (DA Pam No. 550-53.) Washington: GPO, for Foreign Area Studies, 1971.

Hinton, Harold C. *Communist China in World Politics.* New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1966.

*The Indochina Story: A Fully Documented Account by the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars.* New York: Bantam Books, 1970.

Ingersoll, Jasper Cooke. "Human Dimensions of Mekong River Basin Development: A Case Study of the Nam Pong Project, Northeastern Thailand, 1967-1968." Washington: Agency for International Development, 1969 (mimeo., Prepublication version.)

——. "The Priest and the Path: An Analysis of the Priest Role in a Central Thai Village." Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Department of Anthropology, Ithaca: Cornell University, June 1963.

International Labor Organization. *Report to the Committee for Coordination of Investigations of the Lower Mekong Basin on*

*Manpower Related to Development of the Basin.* (ILO TAP AFE R. 10.) Geneva: 1960.

*International Yearbook of Education, 1968,* XXX. Geneva: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, International Bureau of Education, 1968.

*International Yearbook of Education, 1969,* XXXI. Geneva: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, International Bureau of Education, 1969.

Iwata, Keiji. "Minority Groups in Northern Laos, Especially the Yao." (Laos Project Paper No. 16). (Trans., H. Sakomoto; Ed., Joel M. Halpern.) Los Angeles: University of California at Los Angeles, Department of Anthropology, 1960 (mimeo.).

Izikowitz, Karl Gustav. *Lamet: Hill Peasant in French Indochina.* (Etnologiska Studier, No. 17.) Goteborg: Etnografiska Museet, 1951.

Kandre, Peter. "Autonomy and Integration of Social Systems: The Iu Mien ('Yao' or 'Man') Mountain Population and Their Neighbors." Pages 583-638 in Peter Kunstadter (ed.), *Southeast Asian Tribes, Minorities, and Nations,* II. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967.

Kardell, Margaret M. "A Report on Socio-Cultural Conditions in the Laos Study Area, Pa Mong Project, Lower Mekong River Basin." (Prepared for the United States Bureau of Reclamation, US Department of Interior.) Washington: May 1, 1968 (mimeo.).

Kaser, David; Stone, C. Walter; and Byrd, Cecil K. *Library Development in Eight Asian Countries.* Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, 1969.

Keo, Viphakone, "Rural Development in Laos." Pages 256-258 in Vu Quoc Thuc (ed.), *Social Research and Problems of Rural Development in South-East Asia.* Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 1963.

Keyes, Charles F. "Ethnic Identity and Loyalty of Villages in Northeast Thailand," *Asian Survey,* VI, No. 7, 1966, 363-369.

Kirk, Donald. *Wider War: The Struggle for Cambodia, Thailand, and Laos.* New York: Praeger, 1971.

Kunstadter, Peter (ed.). *Southeast Asian Tribes, Minorities, and Nations, I.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967.

Langer, Paul F., and Zasloff, Joseph J. *North Vietnam and the Pathet Lao: Partners in the Struggle for Laos.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970.

——. *Revolution in Laos: The North Vietnamese and the Pathet Lao.* (RM 5935-ARPA.) Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, September 1969.

Laws, Statutes, etc. Royal Government of Laos. "Constitution du Royaume du Laos—11 Mai 1947" (Text revised and adopted by the National Congress in the meeting of September 29, 1956.)

Vientiane: Ministère des Affairs Etrangères, de l'Education Nationale et de l'Information, 1957 (manuscript—mimeo.).

LeBar, Frank M. "Observations on the Movement of Khmu into North Thailand," *Journal of the Siam Society* [Bangkok], LV, Pt. 1, January 1967, 61-79.

LeBar, Frank M., and Suddard, Adrienne (eds.). *Laos: Its People, Its Society, Its Culture.* (Survey of World Cultures, No. 8.) New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1960.

LeBar, Frank M.; Hickey, Gerald C.; and Musgrave, John K. *Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia.* New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1964.

"Le Laos," *La Revue Française de l'Elite Européenne* [Paris], No. 203, October 1967, n.p.

Levy, Banyen Phimmasone. "Yesterday and Today in Laos: A Girl's Autobiographical Notes." Pages 244-265 in Barbara E. Ward (ed.), *Women in the New Asia.* Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 1963.

Luvia, Norman. *A Dragon Apparent: Travels in Indochina.* (Human Relations Area Files: Indochina, Source No. 69.) New York: Scribner's, 1951.

McKeithen, Edwin T. "The Role of North Vietnamese Cadres in the Pathet Lao Administration of Xieng Khouang Province." Xieng Khouang: n. pub., April 1970 (xerox.).

MacRae, Roderick. "Lycees for Laos," *Far Eastern Economic Review* [Hong Kong], XLIX, September 30, 1965, 600-601.

Maspero, Georges. *Un Empire colonial français.* 2 vols. Paris: L'Indochine, 1929.

Masson, André. *Histoire de l'Indochine.* Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1950.

Meeker, Oden. *Little World of Laos.* New York: Scribner's, 1959.

Menger, Matt. *In the Valley of the Mekong.* Patterson: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1971.

*The Military Balance, 1970-1971.* London: Institute for Strategic Studies, 1970.

Munthe-Kass, Harald, "Laos in Tug-O-War," *Far Eastern Economic Review* [Hong Kong], LXIII, No. 9, February 27, 1969, 341-342.

"A Nationalist Awakening." Pages 277-286 in Robert O. Tilman (ed.), *Man, State, and Society in Contemporary Southeast Asia.* New York: Praeger, 1969.

Nguyên-van-Quê. *Historie des Pays de l'Union Indochinois.* Saigon: Imprimerie Nguyên-Khac, 1932.

Niehoff, Arthur. "Theravada Buddhism: A Vehicle for Technical Change," *Human Organization,* XXIII, No. 2, Summer 1964, 108-112.

Norman, Dorothy. *Population and Family Planning Programs: A Factbook.* New York: Population Council, June 1971.

Pathammavong, Somlith. "Compulsory Education in Laos." In United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Compulsory Education in Cambodia, Laos, and Viet-Nam.* Paris: UNESCO, 1955.

"Personalities in Laotian Politics," *Far Eastern Economic Review* [Hong Kong], XXXVII, September 6, 1962. 427-430.

Phimmasone, Phouvong. "The That Luong of Vientiane: An Historical and Bibliographical Study," Pt. 3, *Asia*, III, June 1953, 90-101.

Pierson, Harry H. "Buddhism and the Buddhist Programming of the Asia Foundation in Asia, IV: Laos." San Francisco: Asia Foundation, April 1966 (Unpublished manuscript, not available for public distribution).

"Présence du Royaume Lao," *France-Asie* (Numéro Spécial), XII, March-May 1956.

Reynolds, Frank. "Ritual and Social Hierarchy: An Aspect of Traditional Religion in Buddhist Laos," *History of Religions*, IX, No. 1, August 1969, 78-89.

Robinson, Harry. *Monsoon Asia: A Geographical Survey.* New York: Praeger, 1967.

Royal Government of Laos. Embassy in Washington. *About Laos.* Washington: Press and Information Service, n.d.

Royal Government of Laos. Ministére du Plan et de la Coopération. Service National de la Statistitque. *Bulletin de Statistiques du Laos.* Vientiane: June 1970.

Scalapino, Robert A. (ed.). *The Communist Revolution in Asia: Tactics, Goals and Achievements.* (Rev. ed.) Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1970.

Shaplen, Robert. "Letter from Laos," *New Yorker*, XLIV, May 4, 1968, 136-162.

——. *Time Out of Hand: Revolution and Reaction in Southeast Asia.* (Rev. ed.) (Harper Colophon Books Series, CN 184.) New York: Harper and Row, 1970.

Smith, Charles. "Pressures on Laos," *Asian Affairs* [London], LVII, Pt. 3, October 1970, 285-292.

Smith, Roger M. "Laos in Perspective," *Asian Survey*, III, January 1963, 61-68.

——. "Laos." Pages 527-592 in George McTurnan Kahin (ed.), *Governments and Politics of Southeast Asia.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1964.

Southeast Asian Research Association. *Southeast Asian Survey, 1971.* Tokyo: 1971.

Spencer, J. E., and Thomas, William L. *Asia, East by South: A Cultural Geography.* (2d ed.) New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1971.

Stanton, Thomas H. "Conflict in Laos: The Village Point of View," *Asian Survey*, VIII, No. 11, November 1968, 887-900.

*Statistical Yearbook, 1969.* New York: United Nations, 1970.

Thompson, Virginia. *Labor Problems in Southeast Asia.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1947.

Thompson, Virginia, and Adloff, Richard. *Minority Problems in Southeast Asia.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1955.

Toye, Hugh. *Laos: Buffer State or Battleground?* London: Oxford University Press, 1968.

Trager, George L. "A Bibliographical Classification System for Linguistics and Languages," *Studies in Linguistics* III, No. 1, 1946, 54-108.

Tran Van Dinh. "Laos: The Fiction of Neutrality," *New Republic.* CLVIII, No. 8, Issue 2777, February 24, 1968, 27-29.

United Nations. Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East. *Economic Survey of Asia and the Far East. 1965.* New York: 1966.

United Nations. Statistical Office of the United Nations. Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Population and Vital Statistics Report.* (Statistical Papers, Series A, Vol. XVIII, No. 2.) New York: 1966.

US Agency for International Development. *The Foreign Assistance Program: Annual Report to the Congress, Fiscal Year 1965.* Washington: GPO, 1966.

US Agency for International Development. Office of Statistics and Reports. Bureau for Program and Policy Coordination. *Selected Economic Data for the Less Developed Countries.* Washington: GPO, 1971.

US Congress. 89th, 1st Session. Senate. Committee on the Judiciary. Subcommittee to Investigate Problems Connected with Refugees and Escapees. *Refugee Problems in South Vietnam and Laos* (Hearings, July 13-September 30, 1965). Washington: GPO, 1965.

——. *Refugees from Communism in Asia, Senate Report 59.* Washington: GPO, February 9, 1965.

US Congress. 89th, 2d Session. House. Committee on Appropriations. *Foreign Assistance and Related Agencies Appropriations for 1967.* Washington: GPO, 1966.

US Congress. 90th 1st Session. House. Committee on Appropriations. *Foreign Assistance and Related Agencies Appropriations for 1968* (Hearings, Pts. 1 and 2). Washington: GPO, 1967.

US Congress. 90th, 2d Session. House. Committee on Foreign Affairs. *Foreign Assistance Act of 1968* (Hearings, Pts. 1-4, and Index). Washington: GPO, 1968.

US Congress. 91st, 1st Session. House. Committee on Appropriations. *Foreign Assistance and Related Agencies Appropriations for 1970* (Hearings, Pts. 1-2). Washington: GPO, 1969.

US Congress. 91st, 2d Session. House. Committee on Appropriations. *Foreign Assistance and Related Agencies Appropriations for 1971*, Pt 2: Economic Assistance, Statement of the Secretary of State. Washington: GPO, 1970.

US Congress. 91st, 2d Session. House. Select Committee on United States Involvement in Southeast Asia. *United States Involvement in Southeast Asia.* (Report No. 91-1276). Washington: GPO, 1970.

US Congress. 91st, 2d Session. Senate. Committee on Foreign Relations. Subcommittee on United States Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad. *Laos: April 1971—A Staff Report.* Washington: GPO, August 3, 1971.

——. *United States Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad.* I (Pts 1-4, Hearings). Washington: GPO, 1971.

US Congress. 91st, 2d Session. Senate. Committee on the Judiciary. Subcommittee to Investigate Problems Connected with Refugees and Escapees. *Refugee and Civilian War Casualty Problems in Indochina.* Washington: GPO, September 28, 1970.

——. *Refugee and Civilian War Casualty Problems in Laos and Cambodia.* Washington: GPO, May 7, 1970.

US Congress. 92d, 1st Session. "US Involvement in Laos," *Congressional Record*, CXVII, No. 124, August 3, 1971, S12930-S12966.

US Congress. 92d, 1st Session. House. Committee on Appropriations. *Foreign Assistance and Related Agencies Appropriations for 1972.* Washington: GPO, 1971.

——. *Foreign Assistance and Related Programs Appropriations, Fiscal Year 1972.* Washington: GPO, 1971.

US Congress. 92d, 1st Session. Senate. Committee on Foreign Relations. *Legislative Proposals Relating to the War in Southeast Asia* (Hearings). Washington: GPO, 1971.

US Congress. 92d, 1st Session. Senate. Committee on the Judiciary. Subcommittee to Investigate Problems Connected with Refugees and Escapees. *War-Related Civilian Problems in Indochina.* Pt. I: Laos and Cambodia. Washington: GPO, April 22, 1971.

——. *War-Related Civilian Problems in Indochina*, Pt. II: Laos and Cambodia (Hearings). Washington: GPO, 1971.

US Department of Defense. Military Assistance Institute. *Laos: Country Study and Station Report.* Washington: GPO, 1959.

US Department of Labor. Bureau of Labor Statistics. *Labor Law and Practice in the Kingdom of Laos.* (BLS Report No. 290.) Washington: GPO, 1965.

——. *Labor Law and Practice in the Kingdom of Laos*, by Theodore Bleecker and Donald Bell. (BLS Report No. 381.) Washington: GPO, 1970.

US Department of State. *Burma-Laos Boundary.* (International Boundary Study No. 33.) Washington: The Geographer, Department of State, 1964.

——. *Cambodia-Laos Boundary.* (International Boundary Study No. 32.) Washington: The Geographer, Department of State, 1964.

——. *China-Laos Boundary.* (International Boundary Study No. 34.) Washington: The Geographer, Department of State, 1964.

——. *Fact Book of the Countries of the World.* New York: Crown, 1970.

— —. *Laos-Thailand Boundary.* (International Boundary Study No. 20.) Washington: The Geographer, Department of State, 1962.

——. *Laos-Viet-Nam Boundary.* (International Boundary Study No. 35, Revised.) Washington: The Geographer, Department of State, 1966.

——. *Viet-Nam "Demarcation Line."* (International Boundary Study No. 19.) Washington: The Geographer, Department of State, 1962.

US Department of State. Bureau of Public Affairs. Office of Media Services. *Background Notes: Kingdom of Laos.* Washington: GPO, August 1970.

——. *Gist*, No. 14 (Rev. 2), December 1971, 2.

US Department of the Interior. Bureau of Mines. *The Mineral Industry of Other Far Eastern and South Asian Areas.* Washington: GPO, n.d. (Preprint from the 1969 Bureau of Mines *Minerals Yearbook.*).

US Embassy in Vientiane. Agency for International Development, Mission to Laos. *Facts on Foreign Aid to Laos: Supplement No. 1—Refugees.* Vientiane: AID/ Vientiane, June 1, 1971.

——. *Agency for International Development, Mission to Laos. Facts on Foreign Aid to Laos.* Vientiane: AID / Vientiane, April 1, 1971.

University of Illinois. *Art of Indochina and Southeast Asia.* Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1964.

Urrows, Elizabeth. "Recurring Problems in Laos," *Current History*, LVII, No. 340, December 1969, 361-363.

Walter Reed Army Institute of Research. *Kingdom of Laos.* (Health Data Publication No. 9.) Washington: Walter Reed Army Medical Center, 1960.

Wilder, Bernard. *Literacy Levels of Various Sectors of the Population of Laos.* Washington: International Volunteer Service, 1968.

Wolfstone, Daniel, "U.N. Economic Plan for Laos," *Far Eastern Economic Review* [Hong Kong], XXVIII, January 1960, 46-48.

*Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations.* IV: Asia and Australasia. (Ed., Louis Barron.) London: Worldmark Press, 1970.

*World Radio-TV Handbook, 1970.* (24th ed.) (Ed., J.M. Frost.) Hvidovre, Denmark: World Radio-TV Handbook, 1970.

*World Survey of Education,* IV: Higher Education. Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 1966.

Yates, Warren G.; Sayasithsena, Souksomboun; and Svengsouk, Malichanh. *Lao Basic Course.* II. Washington: Foreign Service Institute, 1971.

Zimmer, Heinrich. *Philosophies of India.* (Ed., Joseph Campbell.) Cleveland: World Publishing, 1956.

## Section II. Political

Adams, Nina S., and McCoy, Alfred W. (eds.). *Laos: War and Revolution.* (Harper Colophon Books Series, CN 221.) New York: Harper and Row for the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars, 1970.

Allman, T. D. "Hanoi Stripper," *Far Eastern Economic Review* [Hong Kong], LXV, No. 37, September 11, 1969, 648.

——. "Laos: Communist Dilemma," *Far Eastern Economic Review* [Hong Kong], LXIX, No. 27, July 2, 1970, 5-6.

——. "Laos: Cradle of War," *Far Eastern Economic Review* [Hong Kong], LXIV, No. 23, June 5, 1969, 568-572.

——. "On the Road to Muong Sai," *Far Eastern Economic Review* [Hong Kong], LXVI, No. 20, September 20, 1969, 418.

Australia. Department of External Affairs. *Select Documents on International Affairs, No. 16: Laos.* Canberra: Department of External Affairs, 1970.

"Background to Laos," *Current Notes on International Affairs* [Canberra], XL, No. 12, December 1969, 684-695.

Bloodworth, Dennis. *An Eye for the Dragon: Southeast Asia Observed, 1954-1970.* New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1970.

"A Brief History of the Pathet Lao: 1945-70," *SEATO Trends and Highlights* [Bangkok] RO / TH / 303, December 1, 1970, 11-19.

British Information Services. *Laos.* London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, June 1970.

Burchett, Wilfred. *The Second Indochina War: Cambodia and Laos.* New York: International Publishers, 1970.

Butwell, Richard. *Southeast Asia Today and Tomorrow.* (2d ed., rev.), New York: Praeger, 1969.

Chomsky, Noam. *At War with Asia: Essays on Indochina.* (Vintage Series, V-640.) New York: Random House, September 1970.

Dobby, Ernest H. G. *Southeast Asia.* (10th ed.) London: University of London Press, 1969.

Dommen, Arthur J. *Conflict in Laos: The Politics of Neutralization.* (Rev. ed.) New York: Praeger, 1971.

——. "Internal Political Development in Laos." (Paper prepared for Council on Vietnamese Studies of Southeast Asia Advisory Group, at Asia House, New York, May 7-8, 1971.) New York: Council on Vietnamese Studies of SEA Advisory Group, May 7, 1971 (mimeo.).

——. "Laos in the Second Indochina War," *Current History,* LIX, No. 352, December 1970, 326-332.

——. "Laos: The Troubled 'Neutral'," *Asian Survey,* VII, No. 1, January 1967, 74-80.

——. "Toward Negotiations in Laos," *Asian Survey,* XI, No. 1, January 1971, 41-50.

Fall, Bernard B. "The Pathet Lao: A 'Liberation' Party." Pages 173-197 in Robert A. Scalapino (ed.), *The Communist Revolution in Asia: Tactics, Goals, and Achievements.* Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1965.

*Far Eastern Economic Review Yearbook, 1967.* Hong Kong: FEER, 1967.

*Far Eastern Economic Review Yearbook, 1968.* Hong Kong: FEER, 1968.

*Far Eastern Economic Review Yearbook, 1969.* Hong Kong: FEER, 1969.

*Far Eastern Economic Review Yearbook, 1970.* Hong Kong: FEER, 1970.

Friedman, Edward, and Selden, Mark (eds.). *America's Asia: Dissenting Essays on Asia-American Relations.* (Vintage Series, V-662.) New York: Random House, 1971.

Gettleman, Marvin, et al. *Conflict in Indo-China: A Reader on the Widening War in Laos and Cambodia.* New York: Random House, 1970.

Girling, J. L. S. "Laos: Falling Domino?" *Pacific Affairs* [Vancouver], XLIII, No. 3, Fall 1970, 370-383.

Goodman, Allan E. "The Political Implication of Urban Development in Southeast Asia: The 'Fragment' Hypothesis," *Economic Development and Cultural Change,* XX, No. 1, October 1971, 117-130.

Greenway, Hugh D. S. "Laos," *Atlantic Monthly,* CCXXIII, No. 3, March 1969, 20-26.

Hall, D.G.E. *A History of South-East Asia.* (3d ed.) (Macmillan Student Editions Series.) London: Macmillan, 1968.

Halpern, A.M., and Fredman, H.B. *Communist Strategy in Laos.* Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 1960.

Halpern, Joel M. *Government, Politics, and Social Structure in Laos: A Study of Tradition and Innovation.* (Southeast Asia

Studies: Monograph Series, No. 4.) New Haven: Yale University, 1964.

Hill, Kenneth L. "Laos: The Vientiane Agreement," *Journal of Southeast Asian History* [Singapore], VIII, No. 2, September 1967, 257-267.

*The Indochina Story: A Fully Documented Account by the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars.* New York: Bantam Books, 1970.

Kirk, Donald. *Wider War: The Struggle for Cambodia, Thailand, and Laos.* New York: Praeger, 1971.

Langar, Paul F. "Laos: Preparing for a Settlement in Vietnam," *Asian Survey,* IX, No. 1, January 1969, 69-74.

— —. *Laos: Preparing for A Settlement in Vietnam.* (P-4024.) Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, February 1969.

——. *Laos: Search for Peace in the Midst of War.* (P-3748.) Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 1967.

Langer, Paul F., and Zasloff, Joseph J. "Laos: Search for Peace in the Midst of War," *Asian Survey,* VIII, No. 1, January 1968, 80-85.

——. *North Vietnam and the Pathet Lao: Partners in the Struggle for Laos.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970.

——. *The North Vietnamese Military Adviser in Laos: A First Hand Account.* (RM-5388-ARPA.) Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, July 1968.

——. *Revolution in Laos: The North Vietnamese and the Pathet Lao.* (RM-5935-ARPA.) Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, September 1969.

Langland, Stanley G. "The Laos Factor in a Vietnam Equation," *International Affairs* [London], XLV, No. 4, October 1969, 631-647.

"Laos: Neutralization Office, Paksong Regained, Prince Phouma's Survey of the Situation," *Asia Research Bulletin* [Singapore], I, No. 5, October 1971, 351.

LeBar, Frank M., and Suddard, Adrienne (eds.). *Laos: Its People, Its Society, Its Culture.* (Survey of World Cultures, No. 8.) New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1960.

Lee, Chae Jin. *Communist China's Policy Toward Laos: A Case Study, 1954-67.* Lawrence: University of Kansas, Center for East Asian Studies, 1970.

Lescaze, Le. "China Sharpens Laos Warning," *Washington Post,* February 21, 1971. n.p.

McKeithen, Edwin T. "The Role of North Vietnamese Cadres in the Pathet Lao Administration of Xieng Khouang Province." Xieng Khouang: n.pub., April 1970 (xerox).

Main, John. "Laos: The Divided Kingdom," *Interplay,* III, No. 9, June 1970, 12-16.

"The Military Situation in Laos," *SEATO Trends and Highlights* (Bangkok), RO / TH / 36, March 1, 1971, 2, 15-19.

Modelski, George. "International Conference on the Settlement of the Laotian Question, 1961-62." (Working Paper No. 2.) Canberra: Australian National University, Research School of Pacific Studies, Department of International Relations, 1962.

——. "SEATO." Pages 184-235 in Francis A. Beers (ed.), *Alliances: Latent War Communities in the Contemporary World.* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970.

Neo Lao Hak Sat (Lao Patriotic Front). *Phoukout Stronghold* N.pl.: Neo Lao Haksat Publications, 1967.

——. *12 Years of U.S. Imperialist Intervention and Aggression in Laos.* N.pl.: Neo Lao Haksat Publications, 1966.

——. *Worthy Daughters and Sons of Lao People.* N.pl.: Neo Haksat Publications, 1966.

Niehoff, Arthur. "Theravada Buddhism: A Vehicle for Technical Change," *Human Organization,* XXIII, No. 2, Summer 1964, 108-112.

"The North Vietnamese Presence in Laos," *SEATO Trends and Highlights* (Bangkok), RO / TH / 309, June 1, 1971, 1, 6-15.

Paul, Roland A. "Laos: Anatomy of an American Involvement," *Foreign Affairs Quarterly,* XIIX, No. 3, April 1971, 533-547.

"Peace Overtures in Laos," *SEATO Trends and Highlights* (Bangkok), RO / TH / 295, April 1, 1970, 1, 6-8.

Peaslee, Amos J. (ed.). *Constitutions of Nations,* II: Asia, Australia and Oceania. (3d ed., rev.) The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966.

Royal Government of Laos. *Livre blanc sur les violations des accords de Genève de 1962 par le gouvernement du Nord Vietnam.* Vientiane: Ministère des Affaires Etrangères du Laos, 1970.

Royal Government of Laos. Embassy in Washington. "Laos." Washington: 1970 (mimeo.).

Royal Government of Laos. Ministère des Finances Royales. *Budget de l'etat 1970-71.* Vientiane: 1971.

Royal Government of Laos. Ministere du Plan et de la Coopération. Service National de la Statistique. *Bulletin de Statistiques du Laos.* Vientiane: June 1970.

SarDesai, D.R. *Indian Foreign Policy in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, 1947-1964.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968.

"Senate Subcommittee Details US Involvement in Laos," *Congressional Quarterly Fact Sheet,* May 8, 1970, 1243-1246.

Shaplen, Robert. "Letter from Laos," *New Yorker,* XLIV, May 4, 1968, 136-162.

——. "Our Involvement in Laos," *Foreign Affairs,* XLVIII, No. 3, April 1970, 478-493.

——. *Time Out of Hand: Revolution and Reaction in Southeast Asia.*

(Rev. ed.) (Harper Colophon Books Series, CN 184.) New York: Harper and Row, 1970.

Simmonds, E.H.S. "The Evolution of Foreign Policy in Laos Since Independence," *Modern Asian Studies* [London], II, No. 1, January 1, 1968, 1-30.

——. "The Problem of Laos," *World Today* [London], XXVI, No. 5, May 1970, 189-196.

Smith, Charles. "Pressures on Laos," Asian Affairs [London], LVII, Pt. 3, October 1970, 285-292.

Smith, Roger M. *Laos in Government and Politics of Southeast Asia.* (2d ed.) Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1964.

——. "Laos." Pages 527-592 in George McTurnan Kahin (ed.), *Governments and Politics of Southeast Asia.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1964.

Stanton, Thomas H. "Conflict in Laos: The Village Point of View," *Asian Survey,* VIII, No. 11, November 1968, 887-900.

Stebbins, Richard P., and Moia, Alba (eds.). *Political Handbook and Atlas of the World, 1970.* New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970.

Stillman, Arthur D. *Notes on Minority Policies in Laos.* (P-4381.) Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, May 1970.

Strock, Carl. "Souvanna at Clifftop," *Far Eastern Economic Review* [Hong Kong], LXIX, No. 29, July 16, 1970, 6.

Tonan Ajia Chosakai (comp.). *Tonan Ajia Yoran,* 1971 (Southeast Asia Factbook, 1971). Tokyo: Tonan Ajia Chosakai, 1971.

Tong, T.S. "Crisis in Vietnam and Laos," *Asian Outlook* [Taiwan], V, January 5, 1970, 44-45.

Toye, Hugh. *Laos: Buffer State or Battleground?* London: Oxford University Press, 1968.

US Congress. 91st, 2d Session. House. Select Committee on United States Involvement in Southeast Asia. *United States Involvement in Southeast Asia* (Report No. 91-1276). Washington: GPO, 1970.

US Congress. 91st, 2d Session. Senate. Committee on Foreign Relations. Subcommittee on United States Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad. *United States Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad: Kingdom of Laos,* (Pt. 2, October 20-22 and 28, 1969). Washington: GPO, 1970.

US Department of State. *The Situation in Laos.* N.pl.: n.pub., September 1959.

US Department of State. Bureau of Intelligence and Research. *World Strength of the Communist Party Organizations, 1971.* (23d Annual Report.) Washington: GPO, 1971.

US Department of State. Bureau of Public Affairs. Office of Media Services. *Background Notes: Kingdom of Laos.* Washington: GPO, August 1970.

US Embassy in Vientiane. Agency for International Development, Mission to Laos. *Facts on Foreign Aid to Laos.* Vientiane: AID / Vientiane, April 1, 1971.

*United States Foreign Policy for the 1970s: Building for Peace.* (Report to the Congress by Richard Nixon, President of the United States, on February 25, 1971.) Washington: GPO, 1971.

Westermeyer, Joseph J. "Traditional and Constitutional Law: A Study of Change in Laos," *Asian Survey,* XI, No. 6, June 1971, 562-569.

*Yearbook on International Communist Affairs, 1970.* (Ed., Richard F. Starr.) Stanford: Stanford University, Hoover Institution Press, 1970.

*Yearbook on International Communist Affairs, 1971.* (Ed., Richard F. Starr.) Stanford: Stanford University, Hoover Institution Press, 1971.

Young, Kenneth Ray. "Neutralism in Laos and Cambodia," *International Studies* [New Delhi], XIV, No. 2, June 1970, 219-226.

Zasloff, Joseph J. "Laos: The Forgotten War," *Asian Survey,* X, No. 1, January 1970, 65-72.

——. "The Pathet Lao: Some Observations on Leadership and Organization." (Paper prepared for Council on Vietnamese Studies of Southeast Asia Advisory Group, at Asia House, New York, May 7-8, 1971.) New York: Council on Vietnamese Studies of SEA Advisory Group, April 28, 1971 (mimeo.).

## Section III. Economic

Adams, Nina S., and McCoy, Alfred W. (eds.). Laos: *War and Revolution.* (Harper Colophon Books Series, CN 221.) New York: Harper and Row, for the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars, 1970.

Bloodworth, Dennis. *An Eye for the Dragon: Southeast Asia Observed, 1954-1970.* New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 1970.

Bouault, J. *Géographie de l'Indochine,* I: Cambodge et Laos. (Editions Géographiques de l'Ideo.) Hanoi: Imprimerie d'Extrême-Orient, 1932.

Burchett, Wilfred. *The Second Indochina War: Cambodia and Laos.* New York: International Publishers, 1970.

Chomsky, Noam. *At War with Asia: Essays on Indochina.* (Vintage Series, V-640.) New York: Random House, September 1970.

Chounlamany, Chanala. "Economic Reporting: Annual Production Assembly and Registration of Motor Vehicles." Vientiane: Directorate of Bridges and Roads, August 20, 1969 (mimeo.).

*Country Study on Laos.* [Asian Conference on Industrialization, under the auspices of the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East: I&NR/Ind. Conf.—(c19.), Manila: August 31, 1965.

Dommen, Arthur J. *Conflict in Laos: The Politics of Neutralization.* (Rev. ed.) New York: Praeger, 1971.

Emery. Robert F. *The Financial Institutions of Southeast Asia.* (Special Studies in International Economics and Development Series.) New York: Praeger, 1970.

——. *The Financial Institutions of the Royal Kingdom of Laos.* N.pl.: Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, July 22, 1969.

*The Far East and Australasia, 1970: A Survey and Directory of Asia and the Pacific.* London: Europa Publications, 1970.

*Far Eastern Economic Review Yearbook, 1966.* Hong Kong: FEER, 1966.

*Far Eastern Economic Review Yearbook, 1967.* Hong Kong: FEER, 1967.

*Far Eastern Economic Review Yearbook, 1968.* Hong Kong: FEER, 1968.

*Far Eastern Economic Review Yearbook, 1969.* Hong Kong: FEER, 1969.

*Far Eastern Economic Review Yearbook, 1970.* Hong Kong: FEER, 1970.

*Far Eastern Economic Review Yearbook, 1971.* Hong Kong: FEER, 1971.

Friedman, Edward, and Selden, Mark (eds.). *America's Asia: Dissenting Essays on Asian-American Relations.* (Vintage Series, V-662.) New York: Random House, 1971.

Gettleman, Marvin, et al. *Conflict in Indo-China: A Reader on the Widening War in Laos and Cambodia.* New York: Random House, 1970.

Ginsburg, Norton S. (ed.). *Area Handbook on Laos.* Chicago: University of Chicago, for Human Relations Area Files, 1955.

Gourou, Pierre. "Land Utilization in Upland Areas of Indochina." Pages 24-42 in Institute of Pacific Relations, *Development of Upland Areas of the Far East,* II. New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1951.

Halpern, Joel M. *Economy and Society of Laos: A Brief Survey.* (Southeast Asia Studies: Monograph Series No. 5.) New Haven: Yale University, 1964.

*The Indochina Story: A Fully Documented Account by the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars.* New York: Bantam Books, 1970.

*Industrial Progress for Laos.* Washington: Continental-Allied, with the Agency for International Development, 1966.

International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. International Development Association. *World Bank, Annual Report, 1970.* Washington: n. pub., September 21, 1970.

International Labor Organization. *Report to the Committee for Coordination of Investigations of the Lower Mekong Basin on Manpower Related to Development of the Basin.* (ILO TAP AFE R. 10.) Geneva: 1960.

International Monetary Fund. *Exchange Restriction, 21st Annual Report. Washington: 1970.*

——. *1970 Annual Report.* Washington: July 22, 1970.

Jones, Emily, and Jones, Alan. "Taming the Mekong," *Far Eastern Economic Review* [Hong Kong], XLIX, September 2, 1965, 418-420.

Jones, Ted L.; Frazier, Russell D.; and Henning, William L., Jr. *An Evaluation of the Agricultural Development Organization of Laos.* Columbus: Agency for International Development and Ohio State University Press, 1969.

Kahin, George McTurnan (ed.). *Governments and Politics of Southeast Asia.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1964.

Kirk, Donald. *Wider War: The Struggle for Cambodia, Thailand, and Laos.* New York: Praeger, 1971.

Kraar, Louis. "Report from Laos," *Fortune*, LXXVIII, No. 3, September 1, 1968, 51-53.

Langer, Paul F. *Laos: Preparing for a Settlement in Vietnam.* (P-4024.) Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, February 1969.

——. *Laos: Search for Peace in the Midst of War.* (P-3748.) Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 1967.

Langar, Paul F., and Zasloff, Joseph J. "Laos: Search for Peace in the Midst of War," *Asian Survey*, VIII, No. 1, January 1968, 80-85.

——. *North Vietnam and the Pathet Lao: Partners in the Struggle for Laos.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970.

——. *Revolution in Laos: The North Vietnamese and the Pathet Lao.* (RM-5935-ARPA.) Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, September 1969.

"Laos," *Far Eastern Economic Review Yearbook, 1962.* Hong Kong: Far Eastern Economic Review, 1962.

"Laos," *Far Eastern Economic Review Yearbook, 1963.* Hong Kong: Far Eastern Economic Review, 1963.

"Laos," *Far Eastern Economic Review Yearbook, 1964.* Hong Kong: Far Eastern Economic Review, 1964.

"Laos," *Far Eastern Economic Review Yearbook, 1965.* Hong Kong: Far Eastern Economic Review, 1965.

LeBar, Frank M., and Suddard, Adrienne (eds.). *Laos: Its People, Its Society, Its Culture.* (Survey of World Cultures, No. 8.) New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1960.

LeBar, Frank M.; Hickey, Gerald C.; and Musgrave, John K. *Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia.* New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1964.

McKeithen, Edwin T. "The Role of North Vietnamese Cadres in the Pathet Lao Administration of Xieng Khouang Province." Xieng Khouang: n. pub., April 1970 (xerox.).

Menger, Matt. *In the Valley of the Mekong.* Patterson: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1971.

Miller, E. W. "Mineral Resources of Indochina," *Economic Geography,* XXII, 1946, 268-279.

Miller, James R. *Rural Electrification Study: Vientiane Province, Country of Laos.* Washington: Natural Rural Electric Cooperative Association, July 1965.

*Minerals Yearbook,* IV: Area Reports, International. Washington: GPO, United States Department of the Interior, 1966.

Pant, Y. P. "Asia's Agricultural Problems," *Far Eastern Economic Review* [Hong Kong], July 25, 1963, 226, 229-231.

Peaslee, Amos J. (ed.). *Constitutions of Nations,* II: Asia, Australia and Oceania. (3d ed., rev.) The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966.

*Pick's Currency Yearbook, 1968.* New York: Pick, 1968.

*Pick's Currency Yearbook, 1969.* New York: Pick, 1969.

*Pick's Currency Yearbook, 1970.* New York: Pick, 1970.

Robequain, Charles. *The Economic Development of French Indo-China.* (Human Relations Area Files: Indochina, Source No. 3.) London: Oxford University Press, 1944.

Royal Government of Laos. Ministère du Plan et de la Coopération. *Plan Cadre 1969-1974: Programme Annuel de Realisation, 1969-1970.* Vientiane: n.pub. 1970.

Royal Government of Laos. Ministère du Plan et de la Coopération. Commissariat General au Plan. *Plan Cadre de Developpement Economique et Social, 1969-1974.* Vientiane: 1969.

Royal Government of Laos. Ministère du Plan et de la Coopération. Service National de la Statisteque. *Bulletin de Statistiques du Laos.* Vientiane: June 1970.

Royal Government of Laos. Ministry of Finance. *State Budget, Fiscal Year 1965-66.* Luang Prabang: 1965.

Scalapino, Robert A. (ed.). *The Communist Revolution in Asia: Tactics, Goals, and Achievements.* (Rev. ed.) Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1970.

Schaff, C. Hart, and Fifield, Russell H. *The Lower Mekong: Challenge to Cooperation in Southeast Asia.* (A Searchlight Original.) Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1963.

Shaplen, Robert. *Time Out of Hand: Revolution and Reaction in Southeast Asia.* (Rev. ed.) (Harper Colophon Books Series, CN 184.) New York: Harper and Row, 1970.

*The Statesman's Yearbook, 1969-1970.* (106th ed.) (Ed., John Paxton.) London: Macmillan, 1970.

*The Statesman's Yearbook, 1970-1971.* (107th ed.) (Ed., John Paxton.) London: Macmillan, 1971.

Stillman, Arthur D. *Notes on Minority Policies in Laos.* (P-4381.) Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, May 1970.

Thompson, Virginia. *Labor Problems in Southeast Asia.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1947.

Thompson, Virginia, and Adloff, Richard. *Minority Problems in Southeast Asia.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1955.

Toye, Hugh. *Laos: Buffer State or Battleground?* London: Oxford University Press, 1968.

United Nations. *Development of Mineral Resources in Asia and the Far East.* Paris: 1953.

United Nations. Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East. *Coal and Iron Ore Resources of Asia and the Far East.* Bangkok: 1952.

——. *Economic Survey of Asia and the Far East, 1965.* New York: 1966.

US Agency for International Development. *The Foreign Assistance Program: Annual Report to the Congress, Fiscal Year 1965.* Washington: GPO, 1966.

——. "Statistical Report, June, 1966—Laos." Washington: 1966 (mimeo.).

——. *US Aid to Laos.* N.pl.: n.d. (pamphlet).

US Agency for International Development. Economic Affairs Division. *The Foreign Exchange Operations Fund for Laos.* N.pl.: May 1970.

US Agency for International Development. Office of Program and Economic Affairs. *Statistical Report, 1968.* N.pl.: June 1968.

US Congress. 88th, 1st Session. Senate. Committee on Appropriations Hearings on HR 11812. *Foreign Assistance and Related Agencies Appropriations for 1965.* (Committee Print). Washington: GPO, 1964.

US Congress. 89th, 1st Session. Senate. Committee on the Judiciary. Subcommittee to Investigate Problems Connected with Refugees and Escapees. *Refugee Problems in South Vietnam and Laos* (Hearings, July 13-September 30, 1965). Washington : GPO, 1965.

——. *Refugees from Communism in Asia, Senate Report 59.* Washington: GPO, February 9, 1965.

US Congress. 89th, 2d Session. House. Committee on Appropriations. *Foreign Assistance and Related Agencies Appropriations for 1967.* Washington: GPO, 1966.

US Congress. 90th, 1st Session. House. Committee on Appropriations. *Foreign Assistance and Related Agencies Ap-*

*propriations for 1968* (Hearings, Pts. 1 and 2). Washington: GPO, 1967.

US Congress. 90th, 2d Session. House. Committee on Appropriations. *Foreign Assistance and Related Agencies Appropriations for 1969*. Washington: GPO, 1968.

US Congress. 90th, 2d Session. House. Committee on Foreign Affairs. *Foreign Assistance Act of 1968* (Hearings, Pts. 1-4 and Index). Washington: GPO, 1968.

US Congress. 91st, 1st Session. House. Committee on Appropriations. *Foreign Assistance and Related Agencies Appropriations for 1970* (Hearings, Pts. 1-2). Washington: GPO, 1969.

US Congress. 91st, 2d Session. House. Committee on Appropriations. *Foreign Assistance and Related Agencies Appropriations for 1971*, Pt. 2: Economic Assistance, Statement of the Secretary of State. Washington: GPO, 1970.

US Congress. 91st, 2d Session. House. Select Committee on United States Involvement in Southeast Asia. *United States Involvement in Southeast Asia* (Report No. 91-1276). Washington: GPO, 1970.

US Congress. 91st, 2d Session. Senate. Committee on Foreign Relations. Subcommittee on United States Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad. *Laos: April 1971—A Staff Report.* Washington: GPO, August 3, 1971.

——. *United States Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad, I [Pts. 1-4, Hearings]. Washington: GPO, 1971.*

US Congress. 91st, 2d Session. Senate. Committee on the Judiciary. Subcommittee to Investigate Problems Connected with Refugees and Escapees. *Refugee and Civilian War Casualty Problems in Indochina.* Washington: GPO, September 28, 1970.

——. *Refugee and Civilian War Casualty Problems in Laos and Cambodia.* Washington: GPO, May 7, 1970.

US Congress. 92d, 1st Session. "US Involvement in Laos," *Congressional Record*, CXVII, No. 124, August 3, 1971, S12930-S12966.

US Congress. 92d, 1st Session. House. Committee on Appropriations. *Foreign Assistance and Related Agencies Appropriations for 1972.* Washington: GPO, 1971.

US Congress. 92d, 1st Session. House. Committee on Government Operations. Subcommittee on Foreign Operations and Information. *Economy and Efficiency of US Aid Programs in Laos and Cambodia.* Washington: GPO, July 12, 1971.

US Congress. 92d, 1st Session. Senate. Committee on Appropriations. *Foreign Assistance and Related Programs Appropriations, Fiscal Year 1972.* Washington: GPO, 1971.

US Congress. 92d, 1st Session. Senate. Committee on Foreign

Relations. *Legislative Proposals Relating to the War in Southeast Asia* (Hearings). Washington: GPO, 1971.

US Congress. 92d, 1st Session, Senate. Committee on the Judiciary. Subcommittee to Investigate Problems Connected with Refugees and Escapees. *War-Related Civilian Problems in Indochina*. Pt. II: Laos and Cambodia (Hearings). Washington: GPO, 1971.

US Department of Labor. Bureau of Labor Statistics. *Labor Law and Practice in the Kingdom of Laos*. by Theodore Bleecker and Donald Bell. (BLS Report No. 381.) Washington: GPO, 1970.

US Department of State. Bureau of Public Affairs. *Gist*, No. 14 (Rev. 2), December 1971, 2.

US Department of State. Bureau of Public Affairs. Office of Media Services. *Background Notes: Kingdom of Laos*. Washington: GPO, August 1970.

US Department of the Interior. Bureau of Reclamation. *Pa Mong Project Lower Mekong River Basin: Stage One Interim Report*. Washington: GPO, 1969.

US Embassy in Vientiane. Agency for International Development, Mission to Laos. *Facts on Foreign Aid to Laos*. Vientiane: AID / Vientiane, April 1, 1971.

Wilder, Bernard. *Literacy Levels of Various Sectors of the Population of Laos*. Washington: International Volunteer Service, 1968.

## Section IV. National Security

Dommen, Arthur J. *Conflict in Laos: The Politics of Neutralization*. (Rev. ed.) New York: Praeger, 1971.

——. "Laos in the Second Indochina War," *Current History*, LIX, No. 352, December 1970, 326-332.

"Done Tiou Police Training Course Ends," Lao Presse, Vientiane, June 12, 1971. [Translated by US Department of Commerce, Office of Technical Services, Joint Publications Research Service (Washington): JPRS: 53,744, *Translations on South and East Asia*, No. 309, August 5, 1971.]

Fall, Bernard B. *Anatomy of a Crisis: The Laotian Crisis of 1960-1961*. Garden City: Doubleday, 1969.

*Far Eastern Economic Review Yearbook, 1970*. Hong Kong: FEER, 1970.

Girling, J.L.S. "Laos: Falling Domino?" Pacific Affairs [Vancouver], XLIII, No. 3, Fall 1970, 370-383.

Guerrini, Dominique. *Organigrammes-organisation politique et administrative du Laos*. Vientiane: Agency for International Development, 1967.

——. *Recueil Methodique de Legislation et Réglementation Lao*. N.pl.: n.pub., October 1966.

Kirk, Donald. *Wider War: The Struggle for Cambodia, Thailand, and Laos.* New York: Praeter, 1971.

Langer, Paul F., and Zasloff, Joseph J. *The North Vietnamese Military Adviser in Laos: A First Hand Account* (RM-5688-ARPA.) Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, July 1968.

——. *Revolution in Laos: The North Vietnamese and the Pathet Lao.* (RM-5935-ARPA.) Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, September 1969.

McKeithen, Edwin T. "The Role of North Vietnamese Cadres in the Pathet Lao Administration of Xieng Khouang Province." Xieng Khouang: n.pub., April 1970 (xerox.)

*The Military Balance, 1970-1971.* London: Institute for Strategic Studies, 1970.

*The Military Balance, 1971-1972.* London: Institute for Strategic Studies, 1971.

Peaslee, Amos J. (ed.) *Constitutions of Nations, II: Asia, Australia and Oceania.* (3d ed., rev.) The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966.

Royal Government of Laos. *Livre blanc sur les violations des accorde de Génève de 1962 par le gouvernement du Nord Vietnam.* Vientiane: Ministère des Affaires Etrangères du Laos, 1970.

Royal Government of Laos. Ministère des Finances Royales. *Budget de l'état, 1970-1971.* Vientiane: 1971.

Smith, Charles. "Pressures on Laos," *Asian Affairs* [London], LVII, Pt. 3, October 1970, 285-292.

Toye, Hugh. *Laos: Buffer State or Battleground?* London: Oxford University Press, 1968.

US Congress. 91st, 2d Session. Senate. Committee on Foreign Relations. Subcommittee on United States Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad. *Laos: April 1971—A Staff Report.* Washington: GPO, August 3, 1971.

——. *United States Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad,* I (Pts. 1-4, Hearings). Washington: GPO, 1971.

US Congress. 92d, 1st Session. Senate. Committee of the Judiciary. Subcommittee to Investigate Problems Connected with Refugees and Escapees. *War-Related Civilian Problems in Indochina,* II: Laos and Cambodia. Washington: GPO, 1971.

US Department of Labor. Bureau of Labor Statistics. *Labor Law and Practice in the Kingdom of Laos,* by Theodore Bleecker and Donald Bell. (BLS Report No. 381.) Washington: GPO, 1970.

US Department of State. Bureau of Public Affairs, Office of Media Services. *Background Notes: Kingdom of Laos.* Washington: GPO, August 1970.

——. *Gist,* No. 14 (Rev. 2), December 1971, 2.

US Department of the Army. 7th Psyops Group. *Topical Reports: Laos—Political.* Issue No. 17-71, February 25, 1971, 1.

US Embassy in Vientiane. Agency for International Development, Mission to Laos. *Facts on Foreign Aid to Laos.* Vientiane: AID/Vientiane, April 1, 1971.

# GLOSSARY

*cadre(s)*—Reliable, indoctrinated functionaries associated with both political and other administrative activities.

*cargo cult*—Religious movement based on expectation that Western-style goods or other cargo will come via some magic or supernatural means as part of the millennium. Adherents of such cults often believe in the necessity of destroying or consuming all the community's goods as a proof of faith in the coming of the cargo.

*CDNI (Committee for the Defense of National Interests)*—A semipolitical organization, in existence from mid-1958 to 1962, composed mainly of army officers and civil servants, advocating government reform to combat communist influence.

*Chieng Mai—See* Lan Na.

*Colombo Plan*—The Colombo Plan for Cooperative Economic Development in South and Southeast Asia. An international cooperative effort instituted at Colombo (Ceylon) in 1950 to assist countries of the area to raise their living standards. In 1971 member nations of the plan included: Afghanistan, Bhutan, Burma, Khmer Republic (Cambodia), Ceylon, India, Indonesia, Iran, Republic of Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Maldive Islands, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Republic of Vietnam, Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, United Kingdom, and United States.

*Free Lao—See* Lao Issara.

*karma*—Fate or destiny. Also religious doctrine upholding belief that the ethical consequences of one's acts in present and past incarnations determine one's lot in future rebirths.

*kip (K)*—Laotian unit of currency. In 1964 a dual exchange rate system was introduced: a basic official rate of K240 per US$1 was established for use in importation of such essential commodities as rice, flour, chemicals, textiles, and agricultural machinery (support of currency at that rate was financed by United States, France, United Kingdom, and Australia); an official free market rate—supported by the Foreign Exchange Operations Fund (FEOF)—was stabilized at K500 per US$1 until November 8, 1971, when it was devalued to K600 per US$1. The basic rate of K240 equal US$1 is used in this text. In 1962 the Neo Lao Hak Sat (*q.v.*) authorities introduced in the areas under their control their own currency, also denominated kip. The Neo Lao Hak Sat kip is not accepted as legal tender in the Royal Lao Government area and, in late 1971, had no known exchange relationship to the United States dollar.

*Lan Na*—Also known as Chieng Mai. Ancient kingdom in northern Thailand. In sixteenth century was ruled by Setthathirath, the son of Lan Xang's king Phothisarath.

*Lan Xang*—Ancient kingdom of Laos founded in A.D. 1353 and generally considered to be the golden age of the Lao. Its first capital, Muong Swa, is now known as Luang Prabang.

*Lao Issara*—Free Lao. Movement formed in 1945 to resist any attempt to return to colonial status.

*Lao Lum*—Literally, valley Laotian. The ethnic Lao, the country's dominant ethnic group.

*Lao People's Liberation Army*—The military arm of the NLHS (*q.v.*); its name until October 1965 was the Pathet Lao (*q.v.*).

*Lao Sung*—Literally, Laotian(s) of the mountaintop. Term in official Laotian use denoting a category of ethnic groups that speak Miao-Yao languages, chiefly the Meo and the Man (Yao).

*Lao Tai*—Tribal Tai. Tai-dialect speakers, mostly non-Buddhist, who inhabit upland valleys and plateaus. Category includes such groups as the Black Tai (Tai Dam), Red Tai (Tai Daeng), Tai Yuan, Tai Nua, and Phutai.

*Lao Theung*—Also known as Lao Theng and Lao Thung. Literally, Laotian(s) of the mountain slopes. Term in official Laotian use denoting ethnic groups that practice slash-and-burn agriculture on hills at elevations below 3,500 feet and that are (as far as is known) speakers of Mon-Khmer languages and dialects. Major Lao Theung group is the Khmu. Lao Theung are regarded by Lao as the original inhabitants of Laos. Were formerly referred to by ethnic Lao as *kha*, meaning slave.

*Mahayana Buddhism*—One of the two major schools of Buddhism, the Mahayana, or Greater Vehicle. Popular in China, Japan, and Korea.

*mandarinate*—Group of nonroyal titleholders who held administrative positions in precolonial and colonial periods. Title and position were not hereditary but tended to be associated with certain families. Members of these families still tended to have power and prestige in 1971.

*muong*—Administrative district, territorial subdivision of province; also traditional district among tribal Tai.

*Neo Lao Hak Sat—See* NLHS.

*NLHS* (*Neo Lao Hak Sat*)—Lao Patriotic Front. The political organization of communist dissidents in Laos formed in 1956. The Lao People's Liberation Army [until October 1965 called the Pathet Lao (*q.v.*)] is its military arm.

*Pathet Lao*—Until October 1965 the name for the Lao People's Liberation Army, the military arm of the NLHS (*q.v.*).

*Phak Pasason Lao* (*PPL*)—People's Party of Laos. The semisecret communist party of Laos that controls the NLHS (*q.v.*).

*phi*—Spirit(s). Such beings animate and inhabit various features of the landscape, as well as dwell within people, according to popular Lao and tribal Tai beliefs.

*Provisional Government of National Union*—*See* tripartism.

*sangha*—Buddhist monastic brotherhood consisting of monks and novices, living in *wat* (*q.v.*) and adhering to the established Theravada Buddhist monastic code of rules. All Buddhist males aspire to enter the *sangha* for some period in their lives.

*stupa*—Called *that* in Laos. A memorial building, usually a hemispherical mound, designed to hold Buddhist relic.

*tasseng*—Canton, territorial subdivision of *muong* (*q.v.*).

*that*—*See* stupa.

*Theravada Buddhism*—One of the two major schools of Buddhism. The official religion of Laos and the principal religion of Ceylon, Burma, Thailand, and Khmer Republic. Sometimes known as the Hinayana, or Lesser Vehicle, school; the other major school, important in the Far East, is called the Mahayana, or Greater Vehicle.

*tripartism*—English equivalent of commonly used Laotian term referring to the system of rule by coalition government (the Provisional Government of National Union), formed in June 1962, of the country's three major political groups: rightist, neutralist, and leftist. Since the late 1960s the leftist group, the NLHS (*q.v.*), has demanded alteration in the tripartite arrangement to reflect "the realities of the present situation in Laos."

*Viet Minh*—A Communist-led organization, represented as a coalition of nationalist groups, that spearheaded Vietnamese resistance to French rule in the 1940s. In 1951 its communist elements were absorbed in newly formed Vietnam Worker's Party, the ruling communist party of North Vietnam.

*wat*—Group of Buddhist religious buildings enclosed by a wall with gateways; Buddhist temple complex.

# INDEX

Abhay family: 175
administrative divisions: viii, 19-20, 156-159
adult education: 69, 101
Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities in Laos: 189
Agreement for Mutual Defense Assistance in Indochina: 200
agreements and treaties (*see also* Geneva agreements, Southeast Asia Treaty Organization): x, 34, 35, 36-37, 167, 169, 188, 189, 193, 194, 200, 211, 219, 247-248, 276, 282
Agricultural Development Organization: 223, 224, 230, 231, 255
agriculture (*see also* crops, farmers, farms and farming): ix, 6, 7, 20, 210, 223, 239; development, 230-231; production, 7, 212, 225, 227-228; shifting, 21, 22, 227; slash and burn, 5, 18, 20, 24, 42, 55, 62, 90, 95, 226, 230; subsistence, 210, 213, 226, 237
aid, foreign (*see also under specific country and under* Lao Patriotic Front—NLHS): ix, 1, 5, 6, 8, 34, 36, 60-68 *passim*, 79, 81, 84, 89, 91, 93, 135, 138, 140, 187, 188, 191, 192, 195, 199, 205, 206, 209, 210, 219-220, 223, 224, 233, 234, 245, 247, 252-254, 266, 284; military, 190, 196, 198, 202, 203, 205, 253, 262, 267, 272, 275-279; projects, 253-254
Air America: 257
air transport service: 91
Air Vietnam: 257
airfields: x, 254, 257, 258
airlines: 223, 257
alcohol: 90, 112
All India Radio: 141
ancestor cult: 107, 124, 125
animism (*see also phi*): 126
Annamite Chain: 12, 13
Anou, Prince: 31
anthem, national: 164
archaeology: 109
architecture: 128, 141
area: vii, 2, 11
armed forces (*see also* aid, foreign: military; Lao People's Liberation Army; military bases; military regions; militia; National Guard; Patriotic Neutralist Forces): 24, 169, 261-288; conditions, pay, and desertion, 269, 270, 271, 275; cost of U.S. aid, 262, 272, 277; equipment and supplies, 266, 267, 276-277; expenditures, 210-211, 215, 216; foreign influence, 275-279; irregulars, 53, 261, 266-278 *passim*; leadership and effectiveness; 273-275; organization, composition and strength, x, 238, 261-262, 264-265, 266, 269; radio, 134, 135; recruitment, 53, 101-102, 239, 262, 269, 270; river force, 264, 267; training, 271-272, 275-276, 277
Armed Forces Information Service: 132
Armee Clandestine. *See Bataillons Guerriers*
Army of the Republic of Vietnam: 278-279
art: 117, 128
Asia, Southeast: 87, 198, 199
Asian Development Bank: x, 220
Asian and Pacific Council: x
Asoka: 108
Associated States of Indochina: 263
Association of Northern Deputies: 179
attitudes (*see also* imperialism, nationalism, nationhood): changes, 63-64, 209-210; NLHS efforts to change, 64-66; toward authority, 283; toward disease and medicine, 69-70; toward education, 238; toward ethnic Lao, 162; toward Laos, 195; toward politics, 166, 188; toward U.S., 163, 165; toward Vietnamese, 133
Attopeu Province: 24, 158
Australia: ix, 135, 219, 233, 253, 254

balance of payments: 246, 251-252
Bandung Afro-Asian Conference: 193, 195
Bangkok: 199, 246, 257, 258
banks and banking (*see also* Development Bank of Laos, National Bank of Laos): 220-223
barter: 8, 220, 226, 245
*Bataillons Guerriers*: 267
Belgium: 253
birth rate: 23
black market: 220

Black Tai: 42, 51, 124, 125, 240
Bolovens Plateau: 14, 18, 24, 228
bombing: ix, 1, 8, 99, 105, 166, 171, 172, 194, 213, 235, 236, 248, 257, 262, 275, 278
bonzes: 107, 112, 113-117, 119-123 *passim*, 138
Borikhane Province: 158
Boun Oum, Prince: 37, 167, 175, 178, 179, 191, 198, 202
boundaries: vii, 11, 228; dispute, 19
Boupha, Gen. Khammouane: 185, 280
Brahmanism: 108, 147
British Broadcasting Corporation: 141
British Information Service: 137
Buddha: 108, 122, 123, 142, 145, 146; doctrine of, 109-111; Emerald Buddha, 30, 109, 141; Prabang Buddha, 29, 31, 109
Buddhism: 30, 108-117, 125, 145, 146, 147, 149, 163, 283; Mahayana, 108, 110, 128; rites, 119-121; and the state, 111-113; Theravada, viii, 5, 29, 107, 108-111, 119, 128, 145, 163; value system, 66
Buddhist Institute: 116, 136
budget, national: 157, 211, 215, 216, 219, 272; defense and security, 170, 266
Burma: 2, 19, 29, 30, 108, 128, 129, 141, 145, 191

cabinet. *See* Council of Ministers
Cambodia: 8, 19, 27, 30, 59, 108, 142, 187, 188, 191; NLHS relations with, 206
Cambodians: 240
Cammon Plateau: 14, 18
Canada: 190, 191, 233, 253
cantons: 156, 158
cargo cult: 126
censorship: 132
census: 20, 48, 75
Champassak kingdom: 2, 31, 45
Champassak Province: 21, 158, 175
Chanhsoth Assurance Company: 224
*chao muong*: 51, 55
Chase Manhattan Bank of New York: 247
Ch'en I: 197
children: ix, 101, 102, 237, 241
China (*see also* China; People's Republic of; Republic of China): 27, 32; cultural influence of, 28, 42, 69, 141, 145
China, People's Republic of (PRC): 19, 54, 69, 104, 138, 141, 149, 181, 187, 189, 245; aid, ix, 1, 2, 8, 97, 99, 258; NLHS relations with, 205; RLG relations with, 195-197; roadbuilding agreement, 282; troops in Laos, x, 261, 282-283
Chinese (people): 59, 60, 104, 106, 131, 140, 240, 255, 256
Chinese Communist Party: 197, 205
Chou En-lai, Premier: 195, 196
Chounramany, Gen. Singkapo: 181
Chounramany family: 175
*Christian Science Monitor*: 202
Christianity: 126
civil service: 75-76, 159-160, 238-239, 243
clans: 56-57, 59, 175
climate: viii, 11, 14-16
clinics: 67, 73, 96
clothing. *See* dress
cluster program: 62-64
collectivization: 7, 211
college: 99
Colombo Plan for Cooperative Economic Development in South and Southeast Asia: x, 84, 204, 254
Commission of Mines and Industries: 235
Committee for Coordination of Investigations of the Lower Mekong Basin: 233, 236
Committee for Defense of National Interests: 36, 177, 178
Commodity Import Program: 253
communication routes: 20
communications; ix, 40, 131-140, 213, 258
communism: 6, 34, 165, 280
communist states: aid, 187, 188; relations with, 193-199
Communists: 96, 149, 163, 183, 196, 281; Chinese, 8, 55; indoctrination and propaganda, 55, 132, 133, 138-140, 141, 145, 183, 194, 196, 197
communization: 7
Constituent Assembly: 150, 161
Constitution: 2; (1945), 33; (1947), 34, 111, 149, 150, 152, 155, 190, 226, 264
construction: 89, 234-235, 242
consumption: 7, 89-90
cooperatives: 7, 103, 104, 219, 223, 231, 245, 273
corn: 86, 227-228
Council of Ministers: 150-156 *passim*, 172, 174
courts: 155-156; Court of Nullification, viii, 156; "people's courts", 288
crafts. *See* handicrafts
credit: 221-227 *passim*, 231
crime and punishment: 286, 287, 288

crops (*see also* rice): 87, 102, 103, 227-228
culture: influences, viii, 28, 32, 42, 69, 76, 108, 127, 128, 130, 141, 142
currency: v, ix, 214-215
customs duties: 218, 250, 252
Czechoslovakia: 199, 205, 215

dance: 144
death rate: 23
Declaration on the Neutrality of Laos: 192
Democratic People's Republic of Korea. *See* Korea, North
Democratic Republic of Vietnam. *See* Vietnam, North
Denmark: 233, 253
Department of Labor: 241, 243
Deuane Sunnarath, Col. : 177, 180, 184, 185, 280
Deuane neutralists: 280
development: plan and planning, ix, 7, 16, 213-215, 230, 232, 233, 236, 258; programs and projects, 84, 230, 253-254
Development Bank of Laos: 222, 223, 224, 235
*dharma*: 109-110, 114
Dien Bien Phu: 28, 189, 283
diet: 86-87, 229
Directorate of: Agriculture, 230; Housing and Town Planning, 234; Information, 131, 132, 133, 137, 140; National Coordination, 284
disease: viii, 69, 71-72
dispensaries: 67, 73, 74, 84, 96, 97
district officer: 157-158, 160
districts: 156, 157, 158
divorce: 50
doctors: 67, 70, 72, 97, 98
drama. *See* theater
dress: 87-88

Economic and Social Development Plan (1969-74): 213, 230, 232, 258
Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East: x, 204, 233, 254
economy (*see also* agriculture, development, finance, industry, inflation, labor, trade): viii-ix, 6; status and structure, 212-213; and the war, 1, 2
education (*see also* adult education, schools, vocational and technical training): viii, 9, 45, 60, 67, 68-69, 75-81, 115, 165, 238, 242; NLHS area, 64, 68-69, 98-102, 234
Eightfold Path (to peace): 110
elections: v, 4, 34, 35, 38, 153, 159, 161, 172, 176, 179 *passim*; procedures and qualifications, 160-161
electricity (*see also* power): use, 89
Electricity of Laos: 232, 236
elite: 2, 3, 44-46, 76, 79, 112, 128, 133, 140, 160, 162, 166, 172, 264
Elysee Agreement: 188, 193
employment: 23, 241; practices, 242-243
English (language): viii, 131, 140, 141
ethnic groups (*see also specific group*): 39-60; composition, 21-22; maps, 39, 40
Europeans: 240
expenditures: 216, 217; military, 210-211, 215, 216
exports: 219, 220, 228, 229, 232, 245, 246, 247, 248-249, 251, 252

Fa Ngoun: 28, 29
family: 48, 54, 56, 59, 82
farmers: 23, 44, 47, 224, 226, 229, 231, 237, 255
farms and farming (*see also* rice: farming): 11, 47, 231
Faydang: 56, 61, 181
fertilizers: 103, 231
festivals: 119, 121-124, 138, 144, 145
Filipinos: 60, 73, 240
films: 127, 132, 137-138
finance (*see also* aid, foreign; banks and banking; budget, national; currency; expenditures; revenue): ix, 215-224
fish and fishing: 18, 86, 228-229, 231
flag: 163
food: 48, 86-87, 94, 95, 102-104, 228, 256
Food and Agriculture Organization, 204
food-handling: 70-71
Forces Armées Royales. *See* armed forces
foreign aid. *See* aid, foreign
Foreign Exchange Operation Fund: 8, 215, 219-220, 221, 252, 253
foreign policy: 165, 174
foreign relations (*see also* aid, foreign): 187-207; international memberships, x, 204
forests and forest products: 11, 17-18, 212, 229-230
France: ix, 72, 79, 137, 140, 142, 200, 219, 232, 287; aid, 34, 81, 84, 135, 233, 253; colonial period, 2, 31-32, 42, 45, 51, 52, 82, 160; cultural influence, viii, 32, 76, 128, 130, 149; military influence, 275-276; relations with, 187-193, 203-204; trade, 229, 251

Franco-Lao guerrillas: 33
Franco-Laotian conventions; 34, 155, 193
Franco-Laotian Treaty (1953): 34
Free French: 33
Free Lao. *See* Lao Issara
Free Lao Front (renamed Lao Patriotic Front—NLHS): 3, 34, 179, 183, 188
*Free World*: 140
freedoms: 150, 190; speech and press, 96, 132
French (people): 59, 60
French (language): viii, 76, 80, 131, 133, 136
French Cultural Center: 137
French Union: 34, 188, 189, 193, 200, 262, 263
funerals: 120-121, 128, 129

Gautama, Lord Siddharta: 108
Geneva agreements: 5, 139, 170, 189-193, 276, 282; (1954), 35, 189-190, 200; (1962), 27, 91, 188, 190-193, 194, 195, 204, 272, 276, 289-296; violations, 194
Geneva conferences: 196, 201; (1954), 3, 35, 195, 198; (1961), 36; (1962), x, 4, 37, 198
Germany, West: 81, 135, 253
Gia Long, Emperor: 31
gold: 246, 248, 250, 252
government (*see also* Government of National Union provisional): the coalition (tripartite), 165-166, 167-171, 180, 184, 201; form of, vii, 2-3, 149; organization, 151
Government of National Union, provisional: 3, 4, 35, 36, 37, 113, 138, 167, 169, 170, 192, 197, 263
governors, provincial: 156-157, 175
Great Britain: 37, 38, 140, 189, 190, 193; aid, ix, 135, 191, 219, 253; trade, 251
gross national product: 210
guerrillas: 33, 34, 267, 268
Gulf of Tonkin: 16

Hammarskjold, Dag: 36
handicrafts: 141, 142-143, 213, 214
Hanoi: 139, 140, 183, 184, 194, 195, 197, 198, 199, 205, 222
health and medical care (*see also* clinics, dispensaries, doctors, hospitals, nurses): viii, 8, 9, 23, 67, 69-75, 118; NLHS area, 96-98
Highway 13: ix
Hinduism: 128, 145, 146
history: 2, 27-38
Ho Chi Minh: 33, 34, 205
Ho Chi Minh Trail: v, ix, 5, 8, 135, 172, 194, 203, 261, 278, 279, 281, 282
holidays: 85
Hong Kong: 87, 257
hospitals: 73, 96, 97, 98
Houa Khong Province: 51, 52, 90, 158
Houa Phan Province: 3, 24, 35, 52, 55, 64, 90, 91, 92, 97, 139, 158, 159, 172, 189, 190, 195, 196, 285
Houei Sai (town): 74
housing: 55, 88-89, 234; in NLHS area, 105
hydroelectric power. *See under* power

illiteracy: 5, 9, 98, 99, 101, 127, 131, 173
imperialism: 139, 163, 165, 180, 206
imports: 87, 89, 210, 219, 220, 222, 229, 245, 246, 247, 249-250, 253, 256
incomes: level, 216; per capita, 210
independence: 2, 33, 34, 37, 188
Independent Party: 176
India: 59, 137, 141, 190, 253; cultural influence, 28, 69, 108, 128, 144, 145, 146, 147
Indochina: 4, 189, 201; agreements, 200, 276
Indochina Federation: 188
industrialization: ix, 6, 231
industry (*see also* construction, manufacturing, mining and minerals, power): ix, 7, 214, 220, 223, 224, 231-237; development plans, 236
infant mortality: viii
inflation: 215, 221
information, public: 131-141, 144
inoculations: 71
Insisiengmay, Leuam: 178
Insisiengmay family: 175
insurance: companies, 224; social, 83-84
interest: 222, 223, 231
Interim Committee: 154
International Bank for Reconstruction and Development: 204, 220, 233
International Civil Aviation Organization: 204
International Commission for Supervision and Control: 35, 36, 37, 189-190, 191, 192, 193, 196, 278
International Conference on Settlement of the Laotian Question: x
International Development Association: 204
International Labor Organization: 204
International Monetary Fund: 204, 214, 219, 220

International Police Academy: 286
Inter-provincial Chamber of Commerce of Luang Prabang: 223
investment: privilege grants, 235, 236
irrigation: 19, 42, 84, 103, 227, 231, 234
Israel: 253, 254
Japan: 26, 33, 219, 232, 243; aid, ix, 231, 233, 253, 254, 257; occupation, 2, 32; trade, 250
Jua Pao: 274
judiciary (*see also* courts): 155-156

*karma*: 110, 111
Kennedy, John F.: 191, 192
Khammouane (city): 21, 232, 254-258 *passim*
Khammouane Cement Company: 223
Khammouane Province: 12, 155, 175
Khamsouk Keola: 185
Khamtay Siphandone, Gen.: 181, 184, 280
Khang Khay (town): 98, 99, 139, 169, 180, 184, 196, 197, 215
Khmer empire: 27, 128, 141
Khmer Republic. *See* Cambodia
Khmu (people): 21
Khoun Borom: 28
Khoun Lo: 28
Khrushchev, Nikita S.: 192
king (*see also* Savang Vatthana, King): 30, 44, 149; kingship tradition, 57; power and role, 111, 151-152, 174, 264
King's Council: 150, 152, 153, 154-155
kip (unit of currency): 214, 215
Kommadam, Sithone: 53, 181
Kong Le, Gen.: 4, 36, 37, 91, 92, 166, 169, 177, 190, 191, 198, 202, 203, 263, 273, 274, 279, 280, 284, 286
*Kongthap Potpoi Pasason*: 139
Korea, North: 206
Korea, South: 206
Kublai Khan: 27

labor (*see also* labor force): Code, 241, 242; contractor, 242-243; forced, 102, 106, 211, 241, 244; household, division of, 48; shortages, 102, 237, 240, 242, 243, 269
labor force (*see also* employment, unemployment, wages and salaries, workmen's compensation): ix, 1, 6, 23, 52, 60, 225, 226, 231, 269; characteristics, 238, 240; size and structure, 237-240
Lan Xang (ancient kingdom of): 2, 27, 28-30, 109, 128, 141, 148, 149, 162-163, 263
land: held by Lao Patriotic Front—NLHS 5, 8, 41, 64-66, 149, 158-159, 173, 187; held by Royal Laotian Government—RLG 5, 41, 173-174, 187; tenure, 44-45, 51, 52, 103, 226-227; use, 225-226
language: 5, 40, 42, 43, 79, 80, 129-131, 139; official, viii, 44, 127, 129-130
Lao (people): vii, 5-6, 8, 9, 61, 124, 160, 162, 175, 180, 240, 263, 269, 279; culture, 127, 128; origin, 27-28; and politics, 166, 188; population, 5, 21; refugees, 92; religion, 107, 283; settlement, 41; social order, 43-50, 283
Lao (language): viii, 44, 79, 80, 98, 100, 101, 115, 127, 128-130, 131-142 *passim*, 145
Lao Airlines: 257
Lao Development Association: 178
Lao-German Technical College: 81
*Lao Hak Sat*: 139
Lao Hak Sat Press: 139
Lao Issara (Free Lao): 33, 34, 139, 174, 175, 176, 179
*Lao Nation*: 133
Lao National Army: 262
Lao National Police. *See* police
Lao National Police Training Center: 284, 286
Lao National Radio: 134, 135, 254
Lao Neutralist Party: 177, 178
*Lao Patriot. See Lao Hak Sat*
Lao Patriotic Front (NLHS) (*see also* Lao Patriotic Front zone): vii, 1, 4, 5, 8, 26, 35, 36, 38, 44, 53, 55, 60, 61, 62, 63, 92, 113, 133, 149, 162, 165, 193, 194, 198, 201; aid, foreign (*see also under* China, People's Republic of; Soviet Union; Vietnam, N.), ix, 68, 191, 245, 258, 259-260; Central Committee, 3, 159, 181, 183, 184, 214; foreign relations, 187, 188, 204-207; information activities, 138-140, 184; leadership and organization, 3, 180-184; peace proposal, 171-172; and politics, 161, 165-178 *passim*, 179-185; population and territory claimed by, 5, 8, 25, 41, 52, 64-66, 149, 158-159, 173, 180, 187; Presidium, 3, 181; values, 66
Lao Patriotic Front (NLHS) zone: administrative divisions, viii, 20, 158-159; agriculture, 211; development planning, 7, 214; economy, 8, 209-215 *passim*; education, schools, 9, 64, 68-69, 98-102, 234; health and medical care, 9, 96-98; industry, 234-236; labor, 243-

244; living conditions, 96-106, 212; N. Vietnam advisory activities, 68; police, 287; power, electric, 234; production, 102; security conditions, 262, 287-288; society, 1-9 *passim*; taxation, 219; trade and transportation, 8, 245
Lao People's Liberation Army: v, x, 1, 2, 9, 12, 23, 25, 38, 93-100 *passim*, 104, 133, 139, 145, 207, 274-275, 287; advisers, 184; defections, 281; and N. Vietnam troop clashes, 206; strength, x, 261, 279, 280, 281; territory controlled by, 24
Lao Press Agency: 133, 134, 140
*Lao Presse:* 133
Lao Sung (people): 42
Lao Theung (people): 21, 24, 42, 52-54, 61, 125, 130, 180, 269, 279
Laotian Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee: 183
Laotian Patriotic Teachers Union: 183
Laotian People's Rally: 177, 178
Laotian Royal Airline: 223
leadership: 64, 65; Lao Patriotic Front—NLHS, 180-184
leftists: 27, 165, 167, 170, 174, 176, 177, 192
legal code: 287
leisure: 85
Liberation Radio: 141
libraries: 136-137
life expectancy: viii, 23
literacy (*see also* illiteracy): 40, 75, 77-78, 101, 130, 133, 135, 136, 271, 285
literature: 145-148
livestock: 103, 211, 214, 228, 231
living patterns: 85-86
living standards: 86-90, 96-106, 212
Luang Prabang (city): vii, ix, 14, 16, 23, 30, 93, 109, 134, 137, 142, 229-235 *passim*, 254, 257, 258; population, 6, 21, 70, 74, 122
Luang Prabang kingdom: 31, 33, 45
Luang Prabang Province: 21, 24, 28, 90, 91, 97, 155, 158, 175, 282
Lycee de Vientiane: 175

Maha Phoumi Chittaphong: 163
Mahakrassad, Gen.: 109
Mahanakay (monastic order): 113
Mahinda: 108
Mahosot Hospital and Nursing School: 74
malnutrition: 71, 86
mandarinate: 44, 64
manpower: 1, 101, 237, 261, 269-270
manufacturing: 6, 213, 225, 235-236
map: xiv, 39, 40
markets and marketing (*see also* black market): 84, 87, 104, 138, 212, 226, 229, 231, 255, 256
marriage and courtship: 50, 51, 54, 119-120, 145
Marxism-Leninism: 6, 9, 67, 100, 101
medical care. *See* health and medical care
Mekong basin and valley: vii, 5, 11, 20, 21, 23, 28, 41, 173, 187, 225, 228, 232, 243, 257
Mekong River: ix, 6, 7, 11, 16, 18, 19, 26, 27, 86, 122, 199, 228, 229, 234, 256; flotilla, 264, 267
Mekong River Development Project: x, 204, 231, 233
men: 125; education, 77; role, 48-49, 51; and the *sangha*, 114
Meo (people): 21-22, 24, 26, 43, 54-58, 61, 62, 100, 180, 261; population, 54; refugees, 90, 91, 92; religion, 126; troops, 261, 269, 274, 275, 276
Meo (language): 130-131, 139
Miao. *See* Meo
middle class: 45-46
migration: 23, 26, 28, 53, 57, 239-240
military bases: 188, 190, 192, 195, 196, 204, 206
military regions: viii, 267-274 *passim*, 282
militia: 268
mining and minerals: 18-19, 225, 232
ministries: list of, 153
Ministry of: Finance, 216, 234, 247, 273; Foreign Affairs, 160, 193; Health, 82, 83; Information, Propaganda, and Tourism, 131; Interior, 83, 156, 157, 264, 284; National Defense, 179, 264, 272, 273; National Economy and Planning, 230, 232, 235, 236; National Education, 78, 79, 136; National Security, 264; Public Health, 83; Public Works and Transport, 83, 234; Religious Affairs, 111, 113, 116; Social Welfare, 82, 83, 241, 243; Veterans' Affairs and War Victims, 272
missionaries: 82, 107, 108, 131
"model state": 102
Mongolian People's Republic: 199
monks. *See* bonzes, *sangha*, Thammayut
monsoons: 11, 14, 85
Moscow: 199, 205
mountains: 11, 12-13

*muong*: 51, 52, 55
Muong Houn (town): 282
Muong Luong Nam Tha (town): 259
Muong Sai (town): 97
Muong Sing: 52, 259

music: 146

Nam Dong (town): 233, 234, 253
Nam Ngum River: 62-63; dam, 16, 93, 233, 234, 243, 253, 254
Nan Chao kingdom: 27
National Assembly: 3, 38, 63, 150, 151, 152, 153-154, 155, 156, 160, 161, 172, 175-179 *passim*, 202, 218
National Bank of Laos: 211, 214, 215, 219-223 *passim*, 247
National Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture: 223
National Congress: 150
National Credit Bank of Laos: 222
National Guard: 269
National Hotel: 223
National Liberation Front of South Vietnam: 5, 141
National Library: 136
National Maternal and Child Health Center: 74
National Police. *See* police
National Progressive Party: 176
nationalism: 2, 6, 163, 180
Nationalist China. *See* Republic of China
nationhood: 132, 149, 150, 162-163
Neo Lao Hak Sat. *See* Lao Patriotic Front—NLHS
Neo Lao Issara. *See* Free Lao Front
Netherlands: 233
neutralists: 4, 36, 37, 38, 165, 167, 169, 174, 177, 180, 184, 190, 191, 192, 196, 198, 202, 203, 280
neutrality: 191, 195, 202, 203; Declaration, x, 37, 192
*New York Times*: 202
New Zealand: 233, 253
news agencies: 133, 134, 140, 194, 204
newspapers: 127, 133-134
Nhouy Abhay: 116
nirvana: 107, 110
Nong Sun Mining Company: 223
Nosavan, Gen. Phoumi: 36, 37, 38, 167, 177, 191, 200, 276
Nouhak Phoumsavan: 181, 183
nurses: 72, 73, 74, 97, 101

Operation Brotherhood: 73
opium: 42, 43, 52, 55, 58, 112, 228, 246, 248, 249, 252
organizations: international, x, 204, 220; Lao Patriotic Front—NLHS—promoted, 65
Ou River: 283

Pa Mong Dam (proposed): 234
Pakistan: 59
Paksane (city): 230
Pakse (city): 21, 74, 93, 95, 137, 221, 232, 253, 254, 256, 257, 258
Pakse Province: 155, 229
Pali (language): 109, 115, 129, 137, 145, 147
Parsons, J. Graham: 198
Pathet Lao: 3, 4, 35, 36, 37, 90, 91, 92, 113, 169, 179, 189, 191, 195, 196, 197, 202, 203, 204, 278, 279
Pathet Lao News Agency: 140, 204
Patriotic Neutralist Forces: 180, 184-185, 206, 207; Alliance Committee, 185; strength, 185
Pavie, August: 32
peace efforts (*see also* Geneva agreements): 35, 36, 37, 166, 167, 171-172
Peace Party: 35, 177
Peking, China: 195, 196, 205
People's Army of (North) Vietnam: 189
People's Party of Laos: vii, 3, 64, 179, 181, 183, 184, 279, 280, 288
People's Republic of China. *See* China, People's Republic of
periodicals: 127
Phak Pasason Lao. *See* People's Party of Laos
Pham Van Dong: 205
Phetsarath, Prince: 33, 34
*phi*: 29, 30, 69, 85, 107, 117-119, 123, 124, 125, 143, 144
Philippines: 59, 73, 74, 75, 253
Phnom Penh, Cambodia: 191, 199, 202, 257
Phomvihan, Kaysone: 181, 183, 280
Phong Saly Province: 3, 35, 64, 90, 158, 185, 189, 190, 195, 197, 282, 285
Phothisarath, King: 30, 117
Phou Khao Khouai (town): 271
Phoui Sananikone: 36, 178, 179, 189, 196
Phoumi Vongvichit: 169, 181, 183
Plain of Jars: 12, 18, 24, 36, 37, 90-97 *passim*, 105, 166, 172, 185, 191, 196, 198, 203, 266, 276, 280: agreement, 167, 169, 170
poetry: 146
Poland: 190

police: x, 38, 262, 264, 266, 283, 284-286; Lao Patriotic Front—NLHS zone, 287
political parties: 166, 172, 175-179
politics (*see also under* Lao Patriotic Front—NLHS): 63, 100, 112-113, 149-162; power, location and structure, 172-175
polygyny: 50, 57
population (*see also under* Lao Patriotic Front—NLHS): vii, 11, 20-26, 41, 51, 52, 54, 58, 59, 60; distribution, 5; official estimate, 20, 22; under Royal Laotian Government—RLG, 237-238
port: 251
Post and Telecommunications Service: 258
power: electric, 89, 213, 232-234; hydroelectric, 19, 232, 233, 234; projects, 7, 16, 93, 233-234, 253
press (*see also* news agencies): 136; freedom of, 96, 132
prime minister: list of, 168; office of, 152, 153, 174, 178
prison system: 286-287
Protestants: 107, 108
provinces: viii, xiv, 19, 156-157, 158, 159
Provisional Government of National Union. *See* Government of National Union, provisional
publishing: 136-137
Quinim Pholsena: 177
radio: 197, 258; broadcasts, 96, 98, 132, 139, 141, 214; stations and receivers, 127, 134, 135, 139, 140, 254
Radio Hanoi: 141
Radio Pathet Lao: 139
Radio of the Patriotic Neutralist Forces: 139
Radio Peking: 141
railroads: ix
rainfall: 11, 14-15, 17
"Red Prince." *See* Souphanouvong, Prince
Red Tai: 42, 51, 125
refrigeration: 70
refugees: 1, 6, 8, 11-12, 23, 24-26, 38, 41, 42, 54, 61, 62, 68, 73, 74, 89, 90-95, 159, 161, 215, 227, 238, 262, 283, 287; categories and aid priorities, 94-95; interviews, 96-98, 102, 105, 106, 113; number of, 92, 93
religion (*see also* Buddhism; Hinduism): viii, 30, 107-126; literature, 145-146; state, 44, 107, 111, 149, 283; tribal, 124-126
Religious Council: 112
Republic of China: 196, 253
Republic of Vietnam. *See* Vietnam, South
retirement systems: 83-84
revenue: 211, 214, 215, 216-218, 250
*Revue de Presse*: 133
rice: 86, 87, 94, 95, 102, 250, 256; farming, 5, 21, 42, 47, 51, 55, 85, 101-102, 118, 124, 225; imports, 210, 227; production, 102, 227, 230; tax, 103, 104, 219
rightists: 27, 37, 38, 165, 167, 174, 176, 177, 191, 192
rivers: 16-17
roads: ix, x, 7, 8, 20, 47, 84, 106, 194, 205, 229, 235, 256-257, 261, 266
Rockefeller Foundation: 137
Roman Catholics: 107, 108
Royal Air Cambodge: 257
Royal Air Lao: 257
Royal Institue of Law and Administration: 81
Royal Lao Air Force: 266, 267, 275, 277
Royal School of Medicine: 72, 81
rural areas (*see also* villages): 68, 79, 87, 138, 233, 240; development programs, 84; literacy, 78; population, 22; trade, 245, 255
Saigon: 199, 200, 222, 257
Sam Sene Thai, Phya: 29
Samneua (city): 102, 172, 176, 180, 183, 184, 205
Sananikone family: 175
*sangha*: 47, 49-50, 110, 111, 112, 113-117, 122, 123, 145
sanitation: 67, 70-71, 82
Sanskrit: 109, 129, 137, 145
Saravane (city): 232, 257
Saravane Province: 24, 158
Sasorith, Katay D.: 195, 201
Savang Vatthana, King: 2, 36, 37, 38, 149, 152
Savannakhet (city): ix, 16, 74, 95, 134, 137, 224, 230, 232, 235, 256, 257, 258; population, 21
Savannakhet Province: 21, 155, 175, 279, 285
Savannakhet Technical College: 81
Sayaboury (town): 74
Sayaboury Province: 95
scholarships: 69, 79
School of Fine Arts: 136, 142
schools (*see also under* Lao Patriotic Front—NLHS zone): 84, 94, 95, 136;

enrollment, 67-68, 69, 76, 79, 98, 99; organization and operation, 78-81; Pali, 109, 116-117
sculpture: 142
security, internal, *see also under* Lao Patriotic Front—NLHS zone): x, 84, 87, 262, 264, 266
Se Done Province: 21, 155, 158
Se Done River: 17, 233
Selebam Dam: 253
Sepone (town): 279
Setthathirath, King: 30, 109
settlement patterns: 20, 41-42, 43
Siam (*see also* Thailand): 2, 29, 31, 32, 128, 130, 141, 144, 145, 148
Sihanouk, Prince Norodom: 191
Siho Lamphouthakoul, Gen.: 200
Singapore: 251
Sino-Indian Agreement of Tibet: 194
Sino-Soviet rivalry: 205
Sisavang Vong, King: 32, 33, 152, 174
Sisavang Vong University (proposed): 81
Sisouk na Champassak: 174, 175, 178, 179
Sithandone Province: 21, 158
Sithone Kommadam School (N. Vietnam): 99
Small Scale Industry Loan Fund: 223-224, 235
smuggling: 216, 228, 246
Social Democrat Party: 177
society (*see also* culture, influences): character of, 1-9; innovations, 6, 62-66; social systems, 39-60; war impact, 23-26, 61-62, 172-173, 283-284
Soth Phetrasy, Prince: 176
Souk Vongsak: 181
Souligna Vongsa: 30, 109
Souphanouvong, Prince: 4, 34, 35, 36, 38, 165, 167, 169, 172, 174, 179, 181, 183, 184, 196, 204, 205, 215
Southeast Asia. *See* Asia, Southeast
Southeast Asia Treaty Organization: 191, 192, 195, 196, 201
Souvanna Phouma, Prince: 4, 34-38 *passim*, 128, 165-179 *passim*, 184, 191, 194-203 *passim*, 215, 278
Soviet Union (*see also* Moscow): 37, 69, 97, 141, 149, 174, 181, 187, 189, 190, 191, 202, 204, 248, 266; aid, 1, 4, 36, 196, 198, 205; relations with, 197-198
Special Service for Political Propaganda: 132
status, social (*see also* elite): 48, 50, 53-54, 58, 129
students: 98, 101
stupa: 30, 109, 141, 323
Switzerland: 250
symbols: national, 149, 151, 163, 174; political, 161
Tai, tribal (*see also* Black Tai, Red Tai): 27, 43, 107, 269; language, 130; population, 21, 50-51; religion, 124-125; settlement, 41-42
tariffs: 236
Taven Ock: 158
taxes: 48, 82, 102, 103, 104, 211, 216, 218, 235, 236
teachers: 75-76, 238, 239; training, 80, 99-100
technology: 209, 226, 230
telephones: ix, 258
television: 127, 135-136
temperature: 11, 15-16
Thai (people): 26, 59, 60, 240
Thai Airways: 257
Thailand (*see also* Bangkok; Siam): 8, 19, 23, 26, 32, 33, 34, 41, 54, 55, 72, 74, 75, 80, 87, 108, 134, 136, 137, 141, 142, 165, 174, 187, 191, 227, 229, 233, 234, 257; aid, 199, 253; Laotian troop training in, 272; relations with, 193, 199-200; trade, 250; troops in Laos, 261, 269-272 *passim*, 278
Thammayut (monastic order): 113
Thao Ly: 274
That Luang: 123, 141
theater: 144-145
Thongdy Sounthone Vichit: 163
Tiao Souk Vongsak: 205
tin: 18, 225, 232, 248
tobacco: 90, 227, 228
Ton Duc Thang: 195
topography: vii-viii, 12-14
Touby Lyfong: 56
tractors: 231, 257
trade (*see also* balance of payments, barter, exports, imports): background, 29, 246-248; domestic, 7, 8, 47, 52, 237, 255-256; international, ix, 8, 246-252; and payments agreement, 247-248
traders, foreign: registration fees and licenses, 247
transportation (*see also* roads): 7-8, 86-87, 91, 213, 229, 231, 245, 256-258; human portage, 102, 105, 211, 244
treaties. *See* agreements and treaties

Udorn, Thailand (airbase): 267
unemployment: 82, 238
United Kingdom. *See* Great Britain
United Nations (*see also specific agencies of*): 34, 77, 160, 190, 196, 253; Bureau of Technical Assistance Organization, 254; membership, x, 204; Security Council Investigation Subcommittee, 36
United States (*see also* United States agencies and departments): 26, 59, 166, 174, 191, 219; aid, 1, 5, 6, 8, 24, 34, 36, 60, 61, 68, 73, 74, 79, 81, 84, 89, 91, 92, 93, 135, 169, 195, 198, 200, 202, 203, 209, 220, 223, 224, 233, 247, 250, 253, 261, 262, 267, 276-277, 284; and the civil war, 4, 35, 36, 38, 67, 171, 194, 277-278; cost of military aid, 262, 272, 277; economic aid mission, 210, 238, 240, 243; "imperialism", 163, 165, 180, 197, 205, 207; influence and impact, 43, 62-64; military advisors and bases, 196; Mutual Security Act, 276; propaganda against, 139, 141; refugee aid cost, 93; relations with, 193, 200-203; trade, 250; training of military and police forces, 272, 276, 277, 284; and Vietnam war, 41
United States agencies and departments: Agency for International Development, 54, 61, 62, 70, 137, 160, 224, 229, 230, 231, 253, 277; Air Force, 203, 262, 278; Central Intelligence Agency, 272, 277; Department of State, 61; Information Service, 135, 137, 140; Military Assistance and Advisory Group: 276, 277; Military Assistance Command, Thailand, 277; Navy, 262, 278; Operations Mission, 276; Program Evaluation Office, 276; Voice of America, 140, 141
Universal Postal Union: 204
university, proposed: 81
University of Hawaii: 79
University of Lyons (France): 72
Upper School of Pedagogy: 80, 81
urban areas: 21, 40, 43, 59, 60, 85; housing, 89; literacy, 78; trade, 255-256
urbanization: 6, 11, 23, 40, 60, 62

values (social, political, and religious): 6, 64, 65, 66, 75, 101, 161, 283
Vang Pao, Maj. Gen.: 267, 269, 272, 274, 276
Vapikhamthong Province: 21, 158
vehicles: 250, 251, 256, 257
Vessantara, Prince: 123
veterans: 272-273
Vientiane (city): ix, 23, 30, 70, 73, 74, 109, 133-137 *passim*, 140, 141, 142, 156, 169, 173, 176, 184, 190, 193, 194, 195, 220, 221, 224, 229, 230, 256, 276, 284; airport, x, 254, 257, 258; construction, 234; manufacturing, 235; population, 6, 21; power, 232, 233
Vientiane (Kingdom of): 2, 31
Vientiane Agreements (1957): 35
Vientiane Plain: 213
Vientiane Province: 21, 93, 155, 175, 227, 285
Vientiane Technical College: 81
Viet Minh: 3, 27, 34, 35, 90, 200, 201, 263, 277, 280
Vietnam (*see also* Vietnam, North; Vietnam, South, *and under* war): 19, 31, 33, 34, 96, 97, 98, 171, 199
Vietnam, North (*see also* Hanoi): v, vii, 54, 55, 102, 149, 165, 187, 189, 236, 257, 274; advisors, 68, 100, 103, 184, 213, 280; aid, 1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 27, 36, 64, 67, 68-69, 138, 140, 209, 245, 259-260; Army, 104; boundary dispute, 19; impact on Lao society, 62, 64-66; and Laos civil war, 34, 35, 36, 187; military activities in Laos, 24, 92, 93; Lao Patriotic Front—NLHS relations with, 205-206; Royal Laotian Government—RLG relations with, 193-195, 204, 280; troops in Laos, x, 92, 93, 95, 171, 172, 194, 195, 196, 203, 273, 278, 280, 281-282; use of Laotian territory, 5, 41, 259; violations of Geneva accords, 194
Vietnam, South (*see also* Saigon): National Liberation Front, 5, 141; Lao Patriotic Front—NLHS relations with, 206; Royal Laotian Government—RLG relations with, 187, 188, 196; troops in Laos, 278-279, 282
Vietnam Fatherland Front: 184
Vietnam News Agency: 194
Vietnam war. *See* war: Vietnam
Vietnam Worker's Party: 181, 183, 184, 197
Vietnamese (people): 45, 59, 60, 61, 104, 106, 131, 133, 140, 160, 180, 240, 255
Vietnamese (language): 101
Vietnamese Advisory Group (Group 959): 184
villages: 20, 39, 55, 56, 85, 89, 113, 116,

118-119, 137, 225, 226, 237; AID cluster program, 62-64; headman, 46-47, 51, 53, 57, 58, 59, 135, 138, 155, 158, 243; justice, 155; under NLHS, 96-106 *passim*; politics, 172; refugee, 95; social system, 46-50, 82
vocational and technical training: 74, 75, 79, 81, 97
Vong Savang Vatthana, Crown Prince: 152
Voravong family: 175
voting: 150, 160-161, 162

wages and salaries: 76, 80, 241
war (*see also* war, civil): Vietnam, 5, 41, 135, 166, 187, 194; World War II, 32-34, 199
war, civil (*see also* peace efforts, refugees): 3-4, 12, 34-38, 92-93, 127, 161, 211, 261, 273, 277-278; casualties, 1, 61-62, 280; impact, 1, 23-26, 61-62, 172-173, 283-284; prisoners, 282
*wat*: 20, 29, 30, 46, 47, 65, 109-117 *passim*, 121, 122, 123, 128, 138, 141, 145
Wat Manorum: 142
Wat That: 137
water: supply, 70, 84, 94; transport, 256
Wattay Airport: x, 254, 257, 258
wealth: 46, 53-54, 90, 129, 160
weaving: 142
welfare: 68, 82-84
wildlife: 18
women: 22, 105, 106, 111, 255; education, 9, 76, 77, 78; employment regulation, 241; in labor force, ix, 237; and religion, 115; role, 48, 51, 66
woodcarving: 141, 143
workmen's compensation: 241
World Bank. *See* International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
World Health Organization: 72, 204, 254
World Meteorological Organization, 204

*Xat Lao. See Lao Nation*
Xieng Khouang (city): 97, 98, 99, 104, 106, 139
Xieng Khousang kingdom: 30, 31, 33, 45
Xieng Khouang Province: 12, 24, 55, 61, 91-99 *passim*, 158, 172, 175, 281

Young Buddhists Association: 112
youth: 143, 184
Youth Movement: 178

Zurich Communiqué: 167, 169, 170

# PUBLISHED AREA HANDBOOKS

| | |
|---|---|
| 550-65 | Afghanistan |
| 550-98 | Albania |
| 550-44 | Algeria |
| 550-59 | Angola |
| 550-73 | Argentina |
| 550-20 | Brazil |
| 550-61 | Burma |
| 550-83 | Burundi |
| 550-50 | Cambodia (Khmer Rep.) |
| 550-96 | Ceylon |
| 550-159 | Chad |
| 550-60 | China, People's Republic |
| 550-63 | China, Republic of |
| 550-26 | Colombia |
| 550-91 | Congo (Brazzaville) |
| 550-67 | Congo (Kinshasa) (Zaire) |
| 550-90 | Costa Rica |
| 550-152 | Cuba |
| 550-22 | Cyprus |
| 550-158 | Czechoslovakia |
| 550-54 | Dominican Republic |
| 550-155 | East Germany |
| 550-52 | Ecuador |
| 550-150 | El Salvador |
| 550-28 | Ethiopia |
| 550-29 | Germany |
| 550-153 | Ghana |
| 550-87 | Greece |
| 550-78 | Guatemala |
| 550-82 | Guyana |
| 550-151 | Honduras |
| 550-21 | India |
| 550-154 | Indian Ocean Territories |
| 550-39 | Indonesia |
| 550-68 | Iran |
| 550-31 | Iraq |
| 550-25 | Israel |
| 550-30 | Japan |
| 550-34 | Jordan |
| 550-56 | Kenya |
| 550-81 | Korea, North |
| 550-41 | Korea, Republic of |
| 550-58 | Laos |
| 550-24 | Lebanon |
| 550-38 | Liberia |
| 550-85 | Libya |
| 550-45 | Malaysia |
| 550- | Mauritania |
| 550-76 | Mongolia |
| 550-49 | Morocco |
| 550-64 | Mozambique |
| 550-35 | Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan |
| 550-88 | Nicaragua |
| 550-157 | Nigeria |
| 550-94 | Oceania |
| 550-48 | Pakistan |
| 550-46 | Panama |
| 550-156 | Paraguay |
| 550-92 | Peripheral States of the Arabian Peninsula |
| 550-42 | Peru |
| 550-72 | Philippines, Republic of |
| 550-160 | Romania |
| 550-84 | Rwanda |
| 550-51 | Saudi Arabia |
| 550-70 | Senegal |
| 550-86 | Somalia |
| 550-93 | South Africa, Republic of |
| 550-95 | Soviet Union |
| 550-27 | Sudan |
| 550-47 | Syria |
| 550-62 | Tanzania |
| 550-53 | Thailand |
| 550-89 | Tunisia |
| 550-80 | Turkey |
| 550-74 | Uganda |
| 550-43 | United Arab Republic |
| 550-97 | Uruguay |
| 550-71 | Venezuela |
| 550-57 | Vietnam, North |
| 550-55 | Vietnam, South |
| 550-75 | Zambia |

✩ U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1973—513-717/13